Book Two

Just a Girl

ORIGINAL MANGA

Story and Art by

Tomoko Taniguchi

The creator of *AQUARIUM* and *PRINCESS PRINCE*

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Book Two

Just a Girl

Tomoko Taniguchi
Writer and Artist

CPM MANGA
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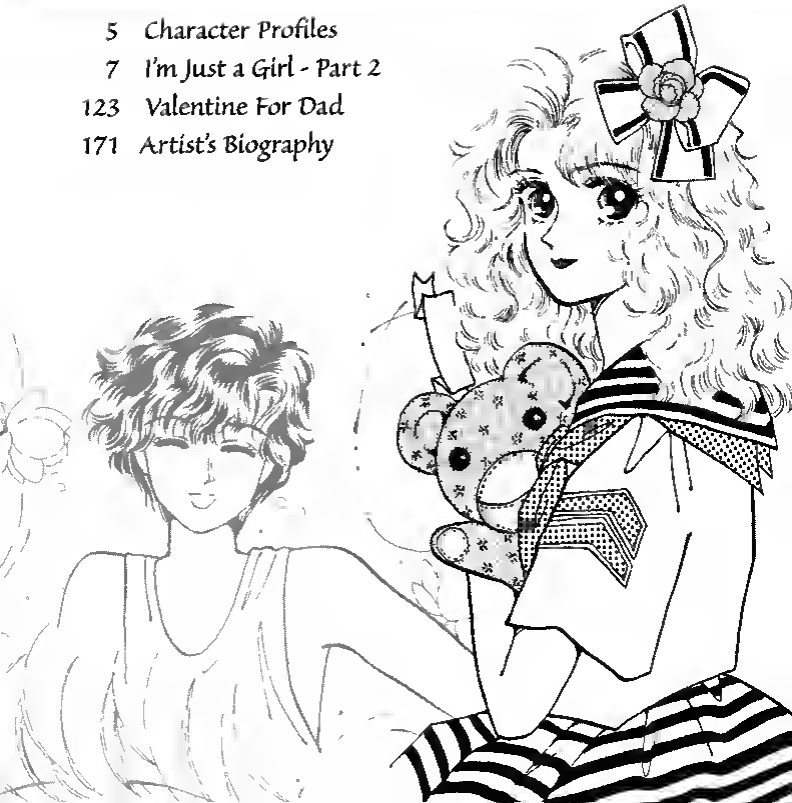


Character Profiles

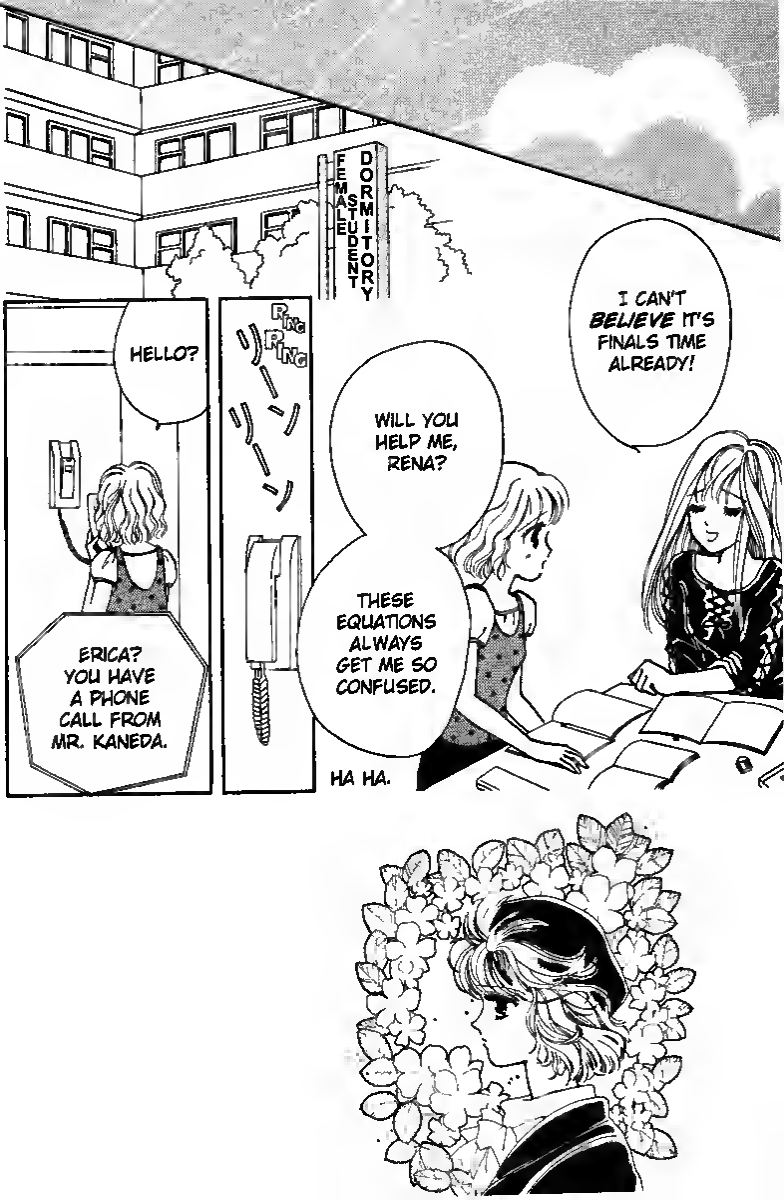
Erica Fujita

Erica was accepted to an exclusive and prestigious high school. That's great for her, but it's too bad that her parents had to move away! Now she's away from home for the first time in her life, with only her plushies to keep her company. Will Erica make friends and be successful?

Rena Kamachi

When Erica moved into the dorm, the first person she met was Rena. Rena looks older and doesn't seem very friendly. Perhaps there's something in her past that she is hiding.

I'm Just a Girl Part 2


FEMALE STUDENT DORMITORY
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S FINALS TIME ALREADY!
WILL YOU HELP ME, RENA?
THESE EQUATIONS ALWAYS GET ME SO CONFUSED.
HA HA.
RING RING
HELLO?
ERICA? YOU HAVE A PHONE CALL FROM MR. KANEDA.

ERICA, HOW ARE YOU? IT'S ME!
WHO IS HE?
MR. KANEDA ?
What?!
I WAS STUDYING FOR MY FINALS, BUT...
OKAY, BUT ONLY IF WE KEEP IT SHORT!
ARE YOU BUSY RIGHT NOW? CAN WE MEET?
ROCKY?
HOW DID YOU GET MY NUMBER?
I CALLED THE FRONT DESK.
GREAT! MEET ME AT THE PARK. BRING YOUR ALIEN.

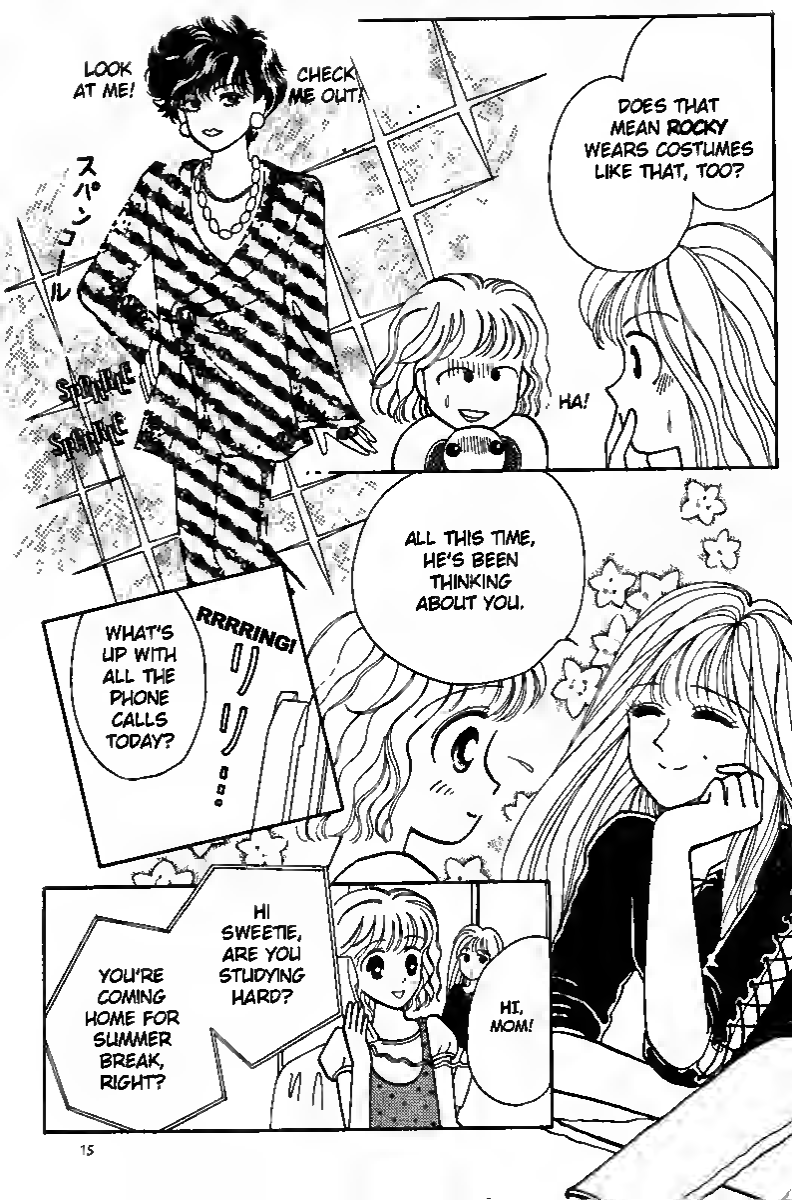
HAVE FUN! GOOD LUCK!
I'm tagging along, too
HURRAY! HURRAY ERICA!
I WONDER WHAT HE WANTS ...
CREAK
カチャ
SUNGLASSES. HE'S TRYING TO LOOK COOL...

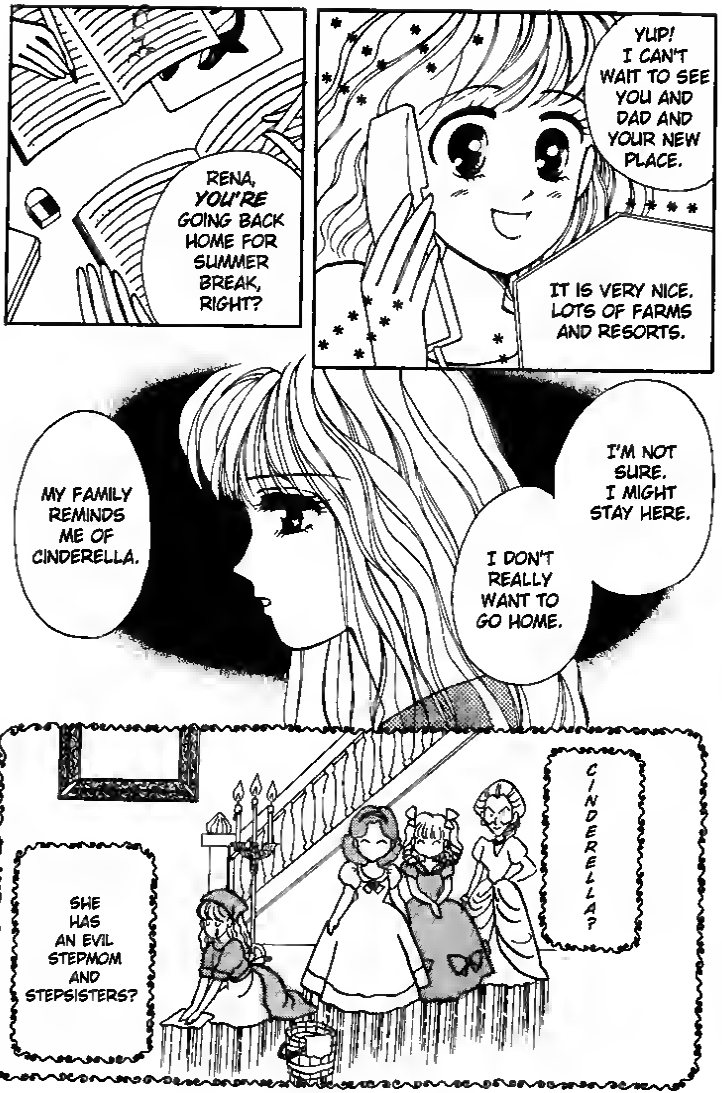
GIGGLE
DID I DOZE OFF?
OOOPS!
THUD
YOU'RE FEELING BETTER. LAST TIME, YOU SEEMED UPSET WHEN YOU LEFT.

GRAB
LET ME SEE HIM.
Aaaah!
I WASN'T UPSET.
IS THAT WHY YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?
CHECK THIS OUT! TA DA!

WOW, THAT'S AWESOME!
I MADE IT OUT OF COSTUME FABRIC SCRAPS.
YOU MADE THIS? HE LOOKS SO GOOD!
Thank you, thank you.
I KNOW YOU'RE BUSY, BUT I REALLY WANTED TO GIVE THAT TO YOU.
DO YOU LIKE IT?
I CAN'T BELIEVE--
--HE MADE THIS FOR ME!

UM, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL ANYONE THAT I CAN SEW, ARE YOU?
THIS IS GREAT! THANK YOU SO MUCH.
YOU ARE VERY SWEET.
AH, I'M JUST KIDDING. WE SHOULD REALLY HANG OUT SOMETIME. GO TO A MOVIE OR SOMETHING.
WOW! HE'S PRETTY GOOD!

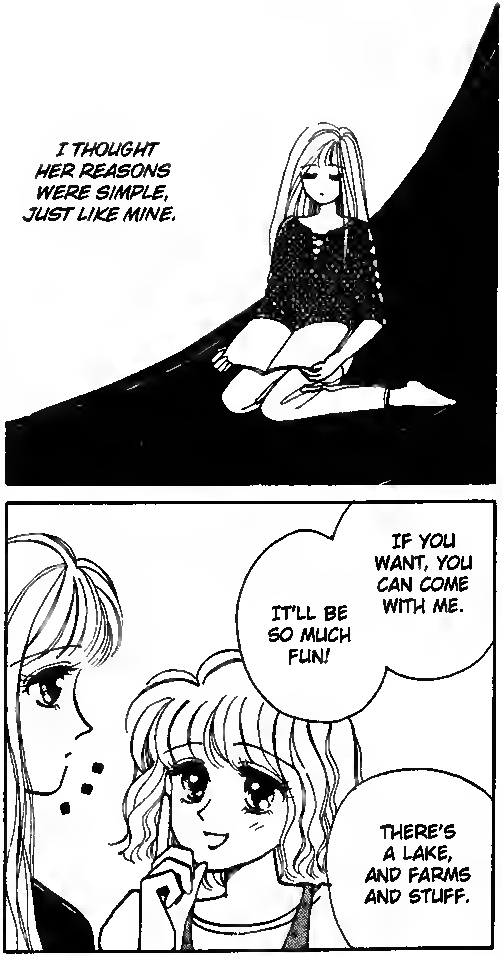

LOOK AT ME!
CHECK ME OUT!
スパンコール
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
DOES THAT MEAN ROCKY WEARS COSTUMES LIKE THAT, TOO?
HA!
ALL THIS TIME, HE'S BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOU.
RRRRING!
WHAT'S UP WITH ALL THE PHONE CALLS TODAY?
HI SWEETIE, ARE YOU STUDYING HARD?
YOU'RE COMING HOME FOR SUMMER BREAK, RIGHT?
HI, MOM!

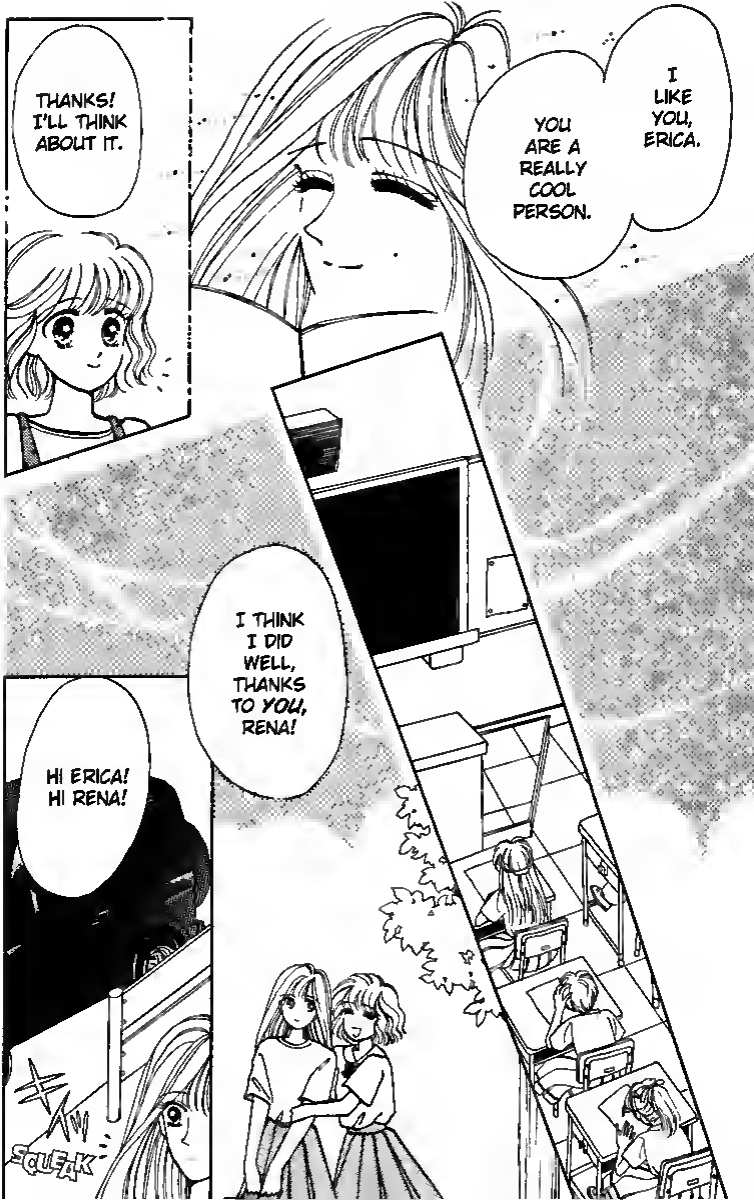

RENA, YOU'RE GOING BACK HOME FOR SUMMER BREAK, RIGHT?
YUP! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AND DAD AND YOUR NEW PLACE.
IT IS VERY NICE. LOTS OF FARMS AND RESORTS.
I'M NOT SURE. I MIGHT STAY HERE.
I DON'T REALLY WANT TO GO HOME.
MY FAMILY REMINDS ME OF CINDERELLA.
CINDERELLA?
SHE HAS AN EVIL STEPMOM AND STEPSISTERS?

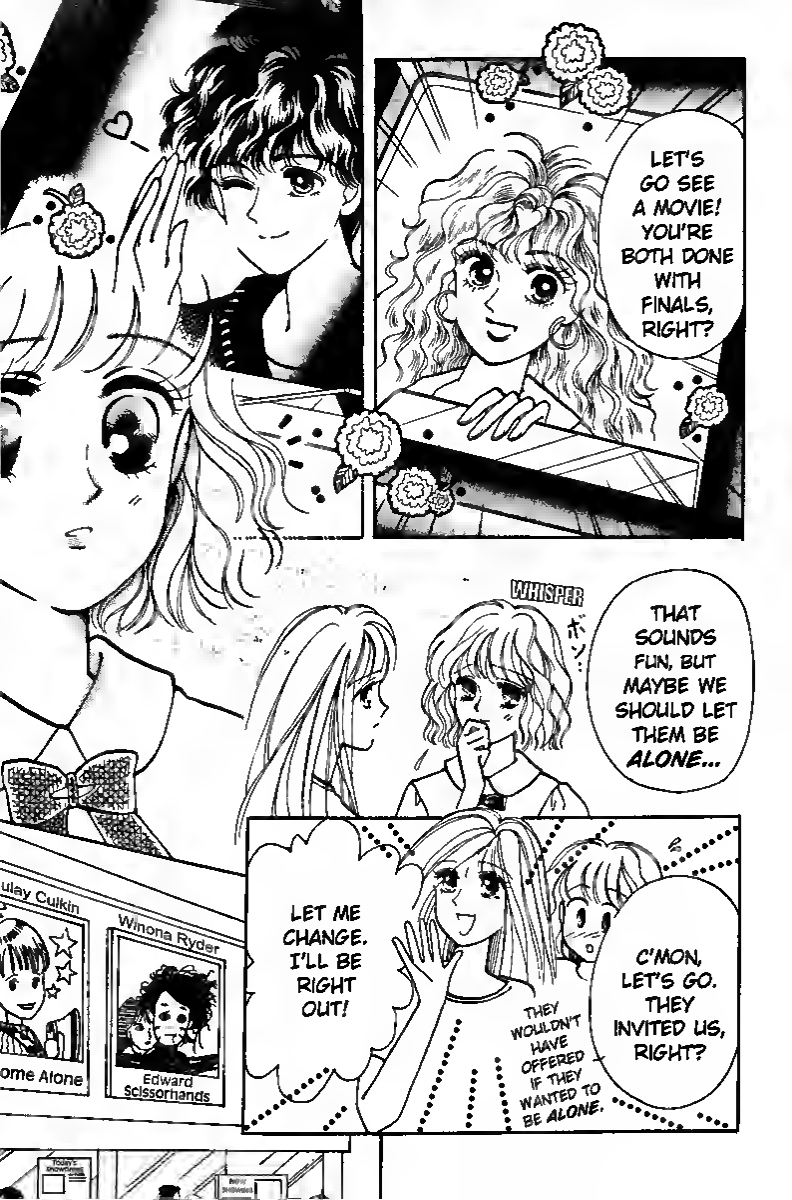
OMAKE 1

HI GUYS! THIS IS THE SECOND VOLUME, SO I'M SURE THERE AREN'T ANY NEW READERS. HOW IS EVERYBODY? THANK YOU FOR READING MY LATEST COMIC! SANTARO HAS BECOME VERY POPULAR! WHEN I FIRST SAW THE DOLL THAT SANTARO WAS MODELED AFTER, IT WAS WORN OUT. I THOUGHT IT WAS KIND OF CREEPY. SOME OF MY FRIENDS ARE AFRAID OF ANYTHING THAT LOOKS LIKE AN ALIEN (THEY MUST HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED, I'M SURE). ONE OF MY FRIENDS WAS REALLY AFRAID OF THAT DOLL AS A RESULT. SINCE I BASED SANTARO ON A CREEPY STUFFED ANIMAL, I DIDN'T THINK HE WOULD BECOME SO POPULAR, BUT MY EDITOR REALLY LIKED HIM. SOON, THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF SANTARO GIFT CONTESTS FOR READERS, SO I WAS SURPRISED. NO SUCH LUCK FOR MEOW MEOW, THOUGH. PHEW.

CONTINUED IN OMAKE 2.


WAIT, I NEVER ASKED WHY SHE WAS LIVING IN A DORM.
I THOUGHT HER REASONS WERE SIMPLE, JUST LIKE MINE.
IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN COME WITH ME.
IT'LL BE SO MUCH FUN!
THERE'S A LAKE, AND FARMS AND STUFF.


I LIKE YOU, ERICA.
YOU ARE A REALLY COOL PERSON.
THANKS! I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
I THINK I DID WELL, THANKS TO YOU, RENA!
HI ERICA! HI RENA!
AW!
SQUEAK


LET'S GO SEE A MOVIE! YOU'RE BOTH DONE WITH FINALS, RIGHT?
WHISPER
ボソ…
THAT SOUNDS FUN, BUT MAYBE WE SHOULD LET THEM BE ALONE...
LET ME CHANGE. I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!
THEY WOULDN'T HAVE OFFERED IF THEY WANTED TO BE ALONE.
C'MON, LET'S GO. THEY INVITED US, RIGHT?
Winona Ryder
Edward Scissorhands

I WANT TO SEE THE MICHAEL J. FOX FILM.
WHAT ABOUT SOMETHING WITH JODIE FOSTER?
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE?
ROCKY'S VERY NICE TO ME, BUT--
LITTLE MERMAID SOUNDS FUN.
WHAT ABOUT THE DOORS?
--HE'S OBVIOUSLY CLOSE TO SOPHIE.

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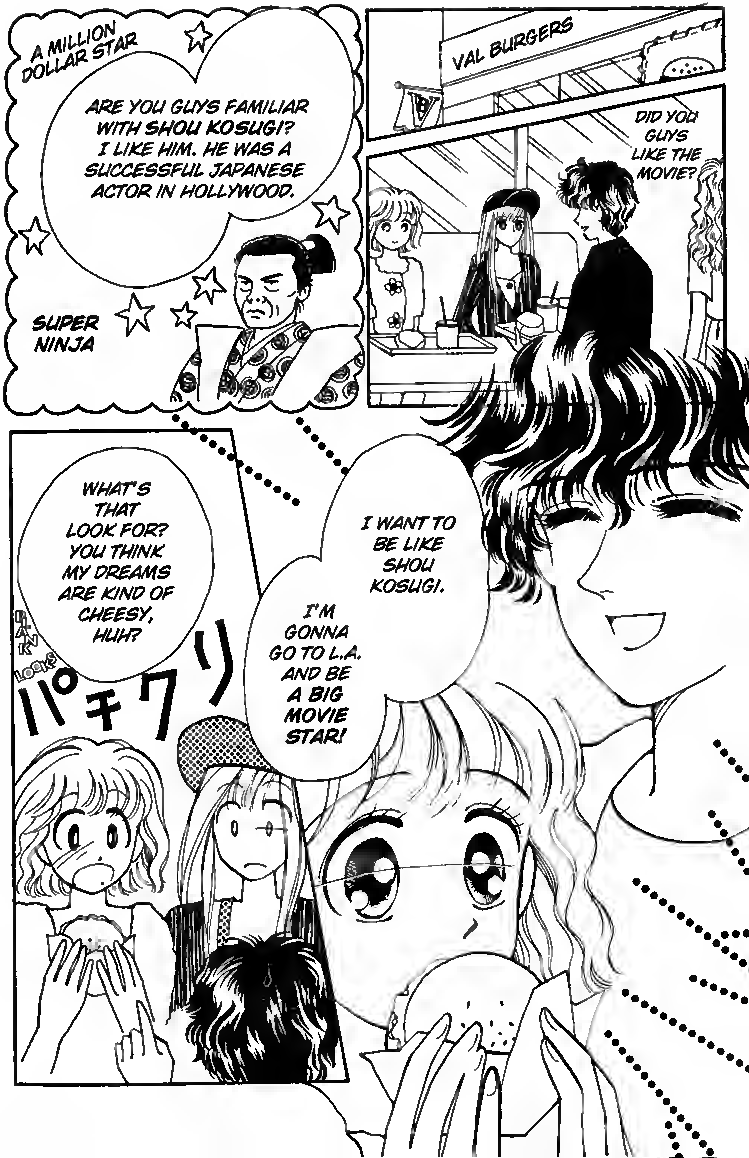
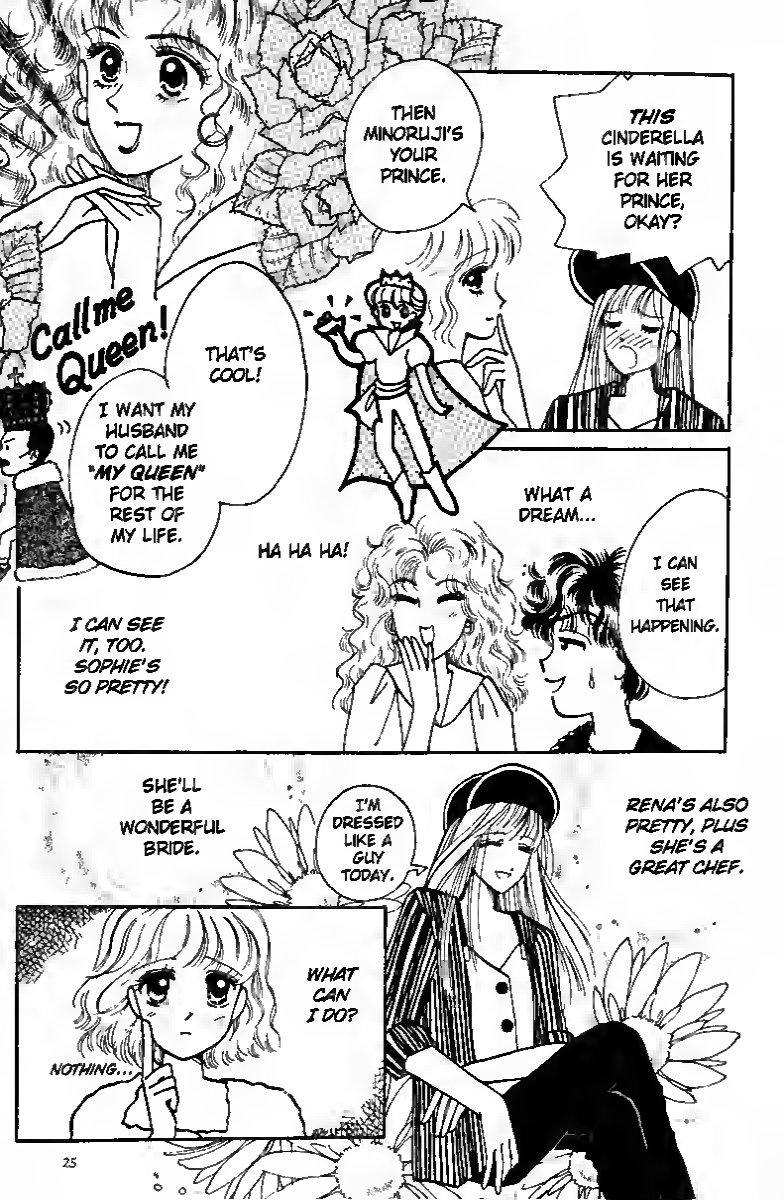
WE DECIDED ON *THE DOORS*.

HE LOOKS SO SERIOUS...
THIS IS A SIDE OF HIM I HAVEN'T SEEN.


A MILLION DOLLAR STAR
ARE YOU GUYS FAMILIAR WITH SHOU KOSUGI? I LIKE HIM. HE WAS A SUCCESSFUL JAPANESE ACTOR IN HOLLYWOOD.
SUPER NINJA
VAL BURGERS
DID YOU GUYS LIKE THE MOVIE?
I WANT TO BE LIKE SHOU KOSUGI.
I'M GONNA GO TO L.A. AND BE A BIG MOVIE STAR!
WHAT'S THAT LOOK FOR? YOU THINK MY DREAMS ARE KIND OF CHEESY, HUH?
LOOK
パチクリ

WOW!
IT MAY TAKE TEN YEARS, BUT I'LL BUILD A HOUSE IN BEVERLY HILLS!
THAT'S WONDERFUL, ROCKY! I'VE NEVER MET ANYBODY WITH SUCH A BIG DREAM!
REALLY?
IT'S GREAT TO HAVE SUCH BIG DREAMS!
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S HAPPENING JUST YET.
THAT'S SO COOL!
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL...

DON'T YOU HAVE DREAMS, ERICA? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE.
I HAVEN'T DECIDED YET.
SO THAT'S WHY HE LOOKED SO SERIOUS...
HE SEEMED LIKE HE WAS LOST IN HIS THOUGHTS...
I WANT TO GET MARRIED.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, RENA?
HMMMMMM


THEN MINORUJI'S YOUR PRINCE.
THIS CINDERELLA IS WAITING FOR HER PRINCE, OKAY?
Call me Queen!
THAT'S COOL!
I WANT MY HUSBAND TO CALL ME "MY QUEEN" FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.
WHAT A DREAM...
HA HA HA!
I CAN SEE THAT HAPPENING.
I CAN SEE IT, TOO. SOPHIE'S SO PRETTY!
SHE'LL BE A WONDERFUL BRIDE.
I'M DRESSED LIKE A GUY TODAY.
RENA'S ALSO PRETTY, PLUS SHE'S A GREAT CHEF.
WHAT CAN I DO?
NOTHING...

I WON'T BE GOING BACK TO FRANCE UNTIL CHRISTMAS.
NO, I'VE FOUND A JOB HERE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING BACK HOME?
I'LL BE WORKING MORE DURING SUMMER BREAK. I'LL BE SO TIRED...
THAT MEANS I WON'T SEE ROCKY DURING SUMMER BREAK.
YEAH.
ARE YOU GOING TO SEE YOUR FOLKS, ERICA?
I CAN'T, I'M DRIVING.
ROCKY, LET'S GO GET A DRINK!
BESIDES, ERICA AND RENA CAN'T DRINK YET.
SOPHIE, IT'S ALMOST CURFEW!
THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME HAPPY.
Female Student Dormitory

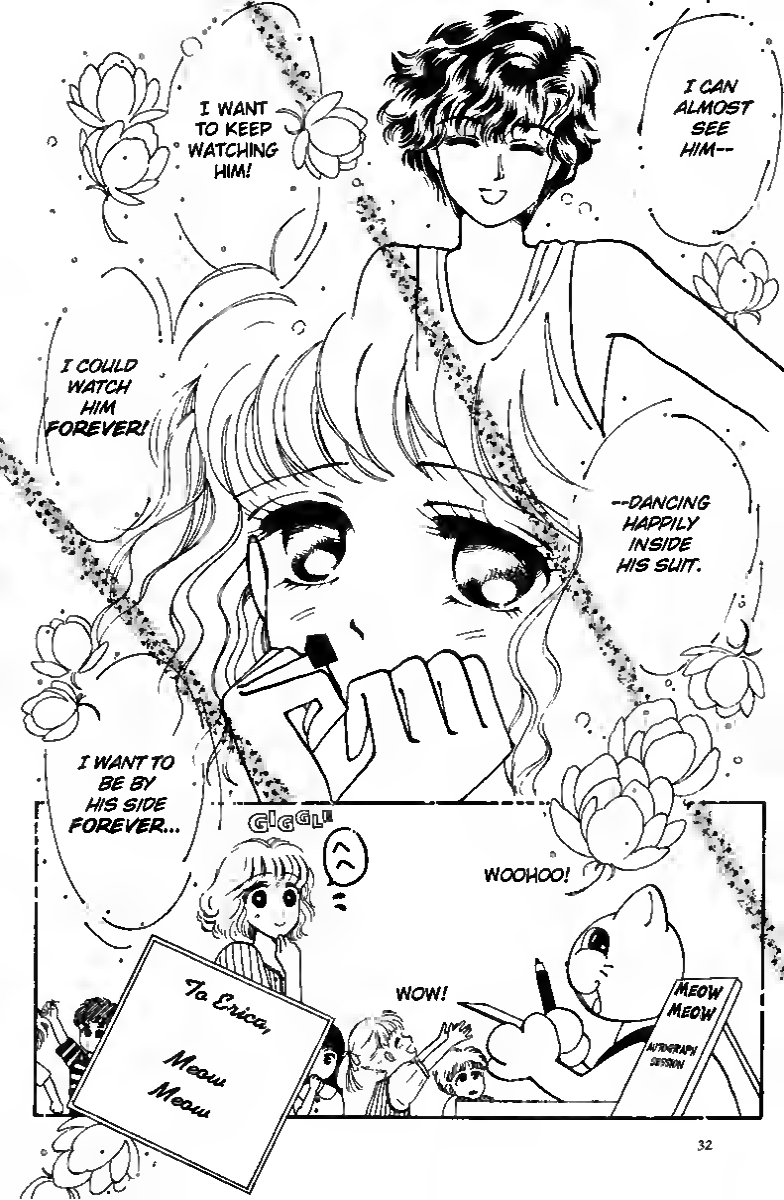
I'LL DRINK AT YOUR APARTMENT TONIGHT!
I'LL GET MY OVERNIGHT PERMIT LATER.
ALL RIGHT.
GOOD NIGHT ERICA, RENA!
GOOD NIGHT!
THEY TREAT US LIKE LITTLE KIDS. THEY DIDN'T INVITE US.
SOPHIE GETS TO SPEND--
--SUMMER WITH ROCKY.

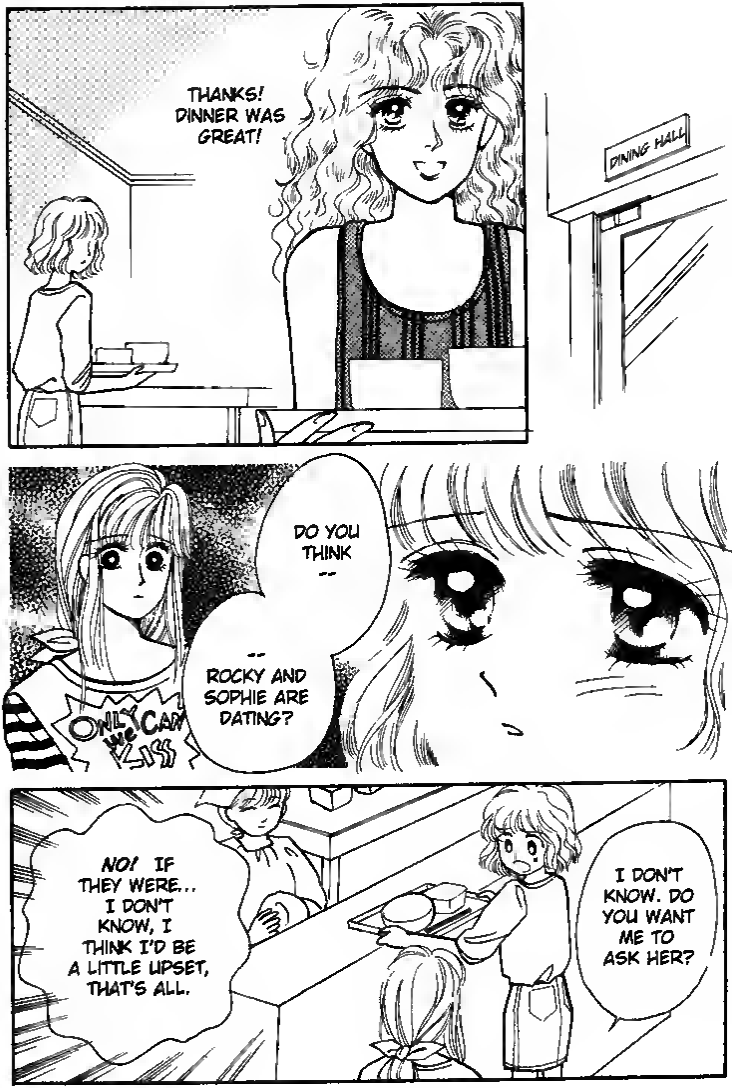
DEPARTMENT STORE
MARUKOSHI
CLEARANCE SALE
SUMMER
OH!
THEY'RE TOGETHER --
ARE THEY ALONE?
--RIGHT NOW!
DASH
ダッ
ダッ

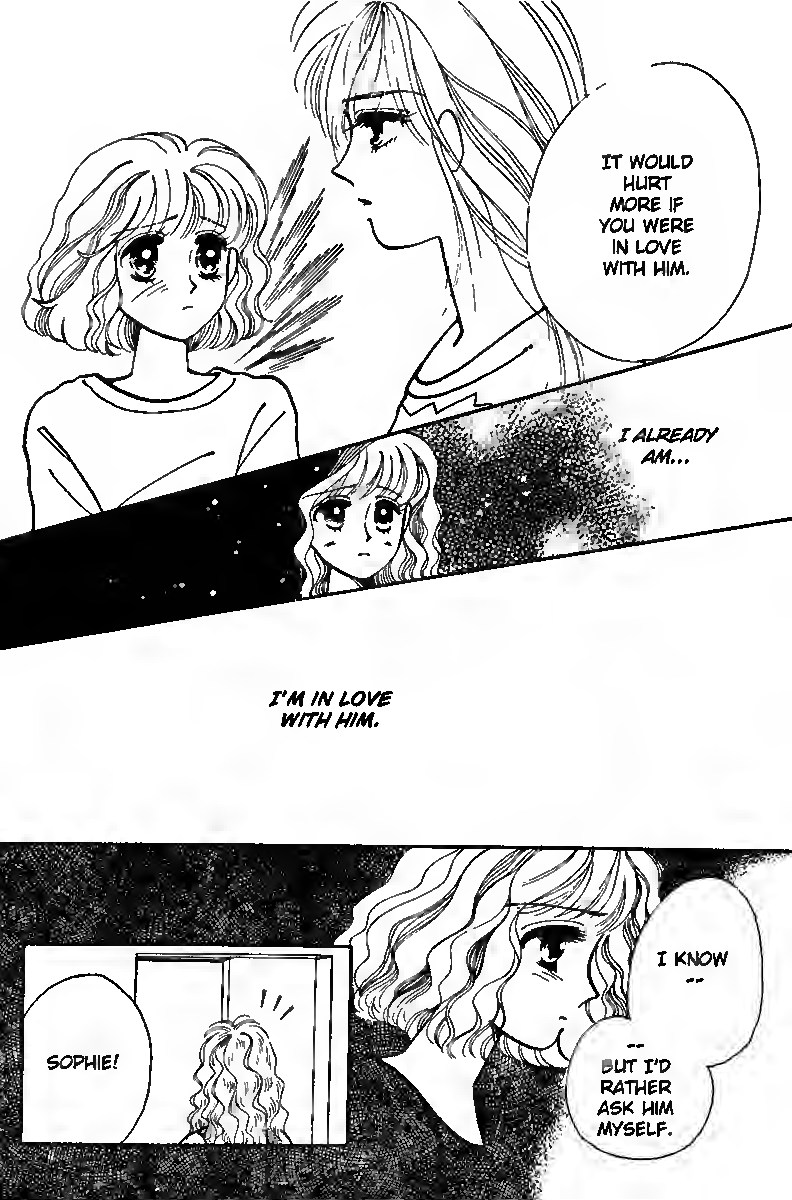
HUG
WHAT'S GOING ON?
LOOK! IT'S MEOW MEOW!
AAAH! WHAT? WHO ARE YOU?
OH GOD, ROCKY! LET ME GO!
WHAT DO YOU THINK? DON'T YOU LIKE STUFF LIKE THIS? CAN'T I HUG YOU?
THAT ACCENT...
IT'S ME! ARE YOU SHOPPING?
SHOPPING?

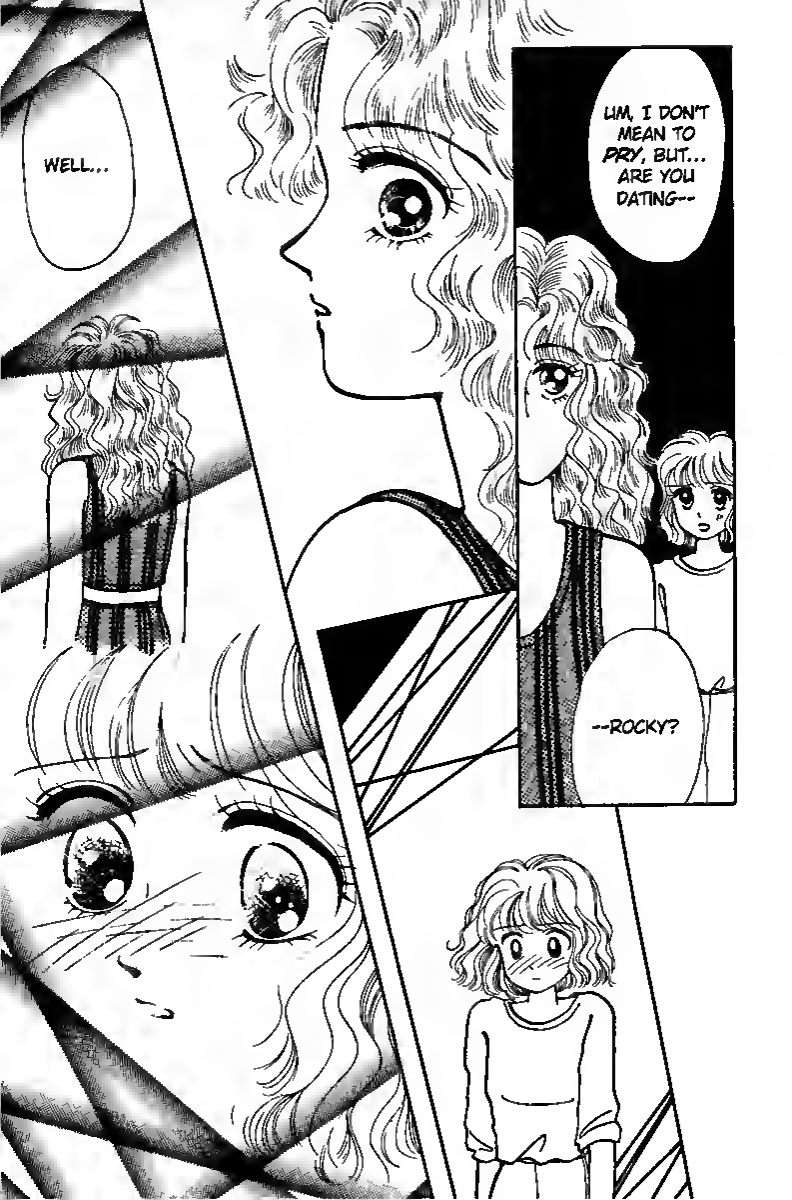
FLASHY AND CUTE! I CAN DO ACTION, TOO!
I LOVE THIS! I'M REALLY GOOD WITH THIS KIND OF STUFF!
BUT IT CAN GET REALLY HOT INSIDE THESE SUITS.
I DO THIS FOR AMUSEMENT PARKS, TOO.
YOU'RE DOING A LOT OF SHOPPING.
YEAH. GIFTS FOR MOM AND DAD.
SO THIS IS THE BIG JOB THAT YOU FOUND?
WOW, ROCKY IS MULTI-TALENTED.
WELL, IT'S SHOWTIME! I GOTTA GO!
I'LL STAY AND WATCH.
MEOW MEOW AND HIS FRIENDS IN THE FOREST! SPECIAL SHOWING!

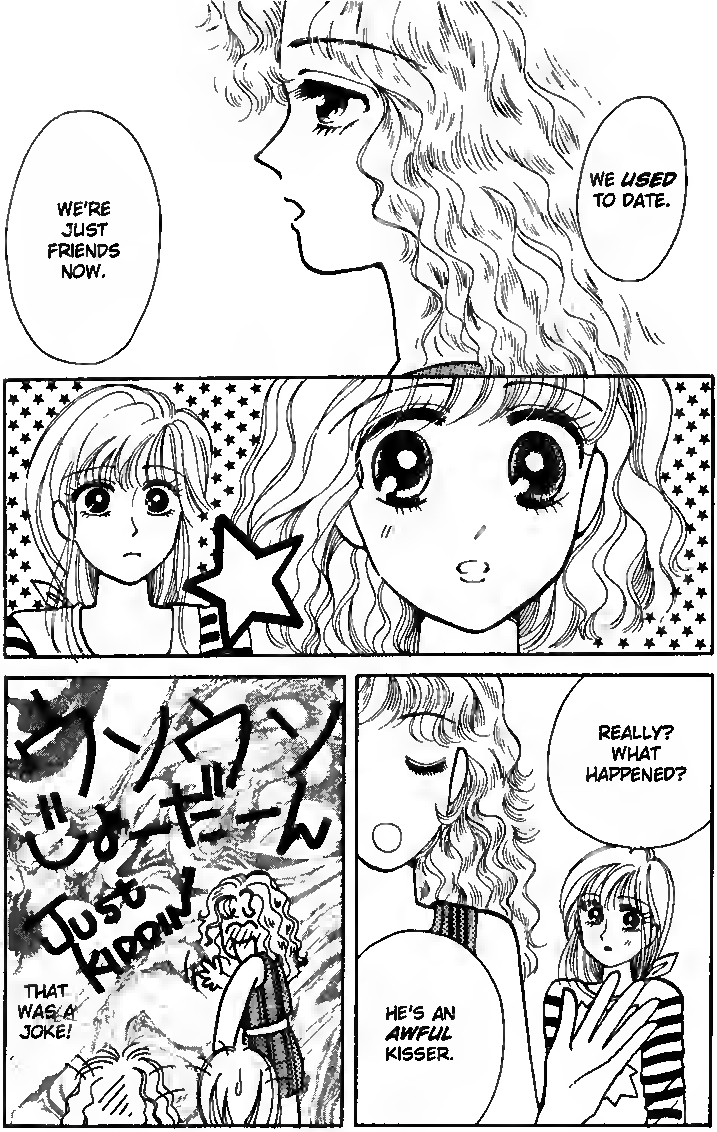
LA-LA-LA-
LA-LA-LA!
TRA-
LA-LA!
WOW,
HE CAN
EVEN
DANCE!
HE
IS SO
CUTE!


I WANT TO KEEP WATCHING HIM!
I CAN ALMOST SEE HIM--
I COULD WATCH HIM FOREVER!
--DANCING HAPPILY INSIDE HIS SUIT.
I WANT TO BE BY HIS SIDE FOREVER...
GIGGLE
WOOHOO!
WOW!
To Erica,
Meow
Meow
MEOW MEOW
AUTOGRAPH SESSION

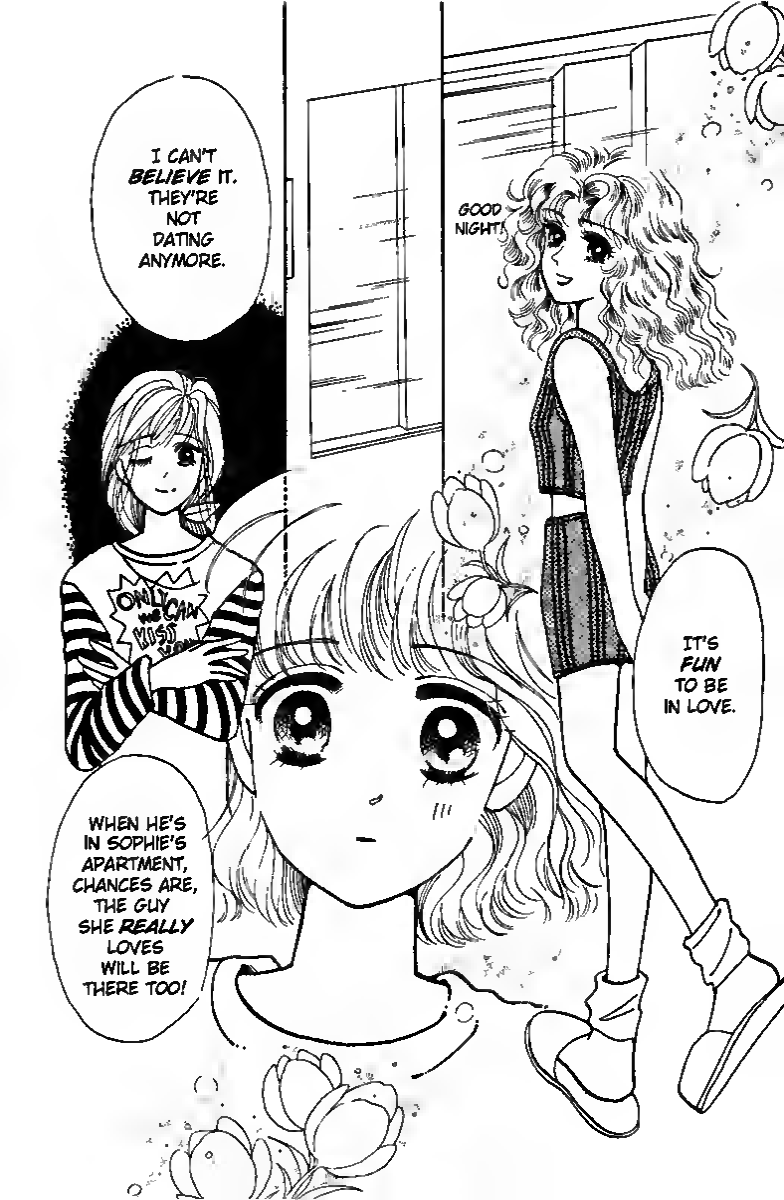

THANKS! DINNER WAS GREAT!
DINING HALL
DO YOU THINK --
-- ROCKY AND SOPHIE ARE DATING?
ONLY We CAN
NO! IF THEY WERE... I DON'T KNOW, I THINK I'D BE A LITTLE UPSET, THAT'S ALL.
I DON'T KNOW. DO YOU WANT ME TO ASK HER?

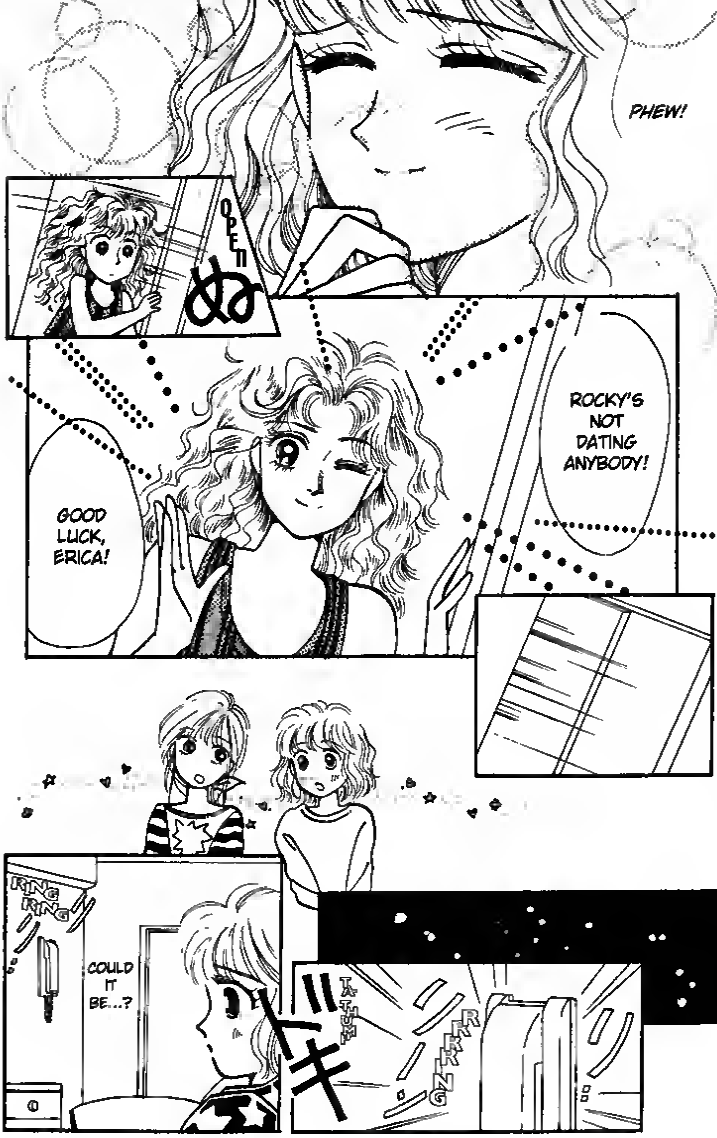

IT WOULD HURT MORE IF YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH HIM.
I ALREADY AM...
I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM.
I KNOW --
-- BUT I'D RATHER ASK HIM MYSELF.
SOPHIE!


WELL...
UM, I DON'T MEAN TO PRY, BUT... ARE YOU DATING--
--ROCKY?

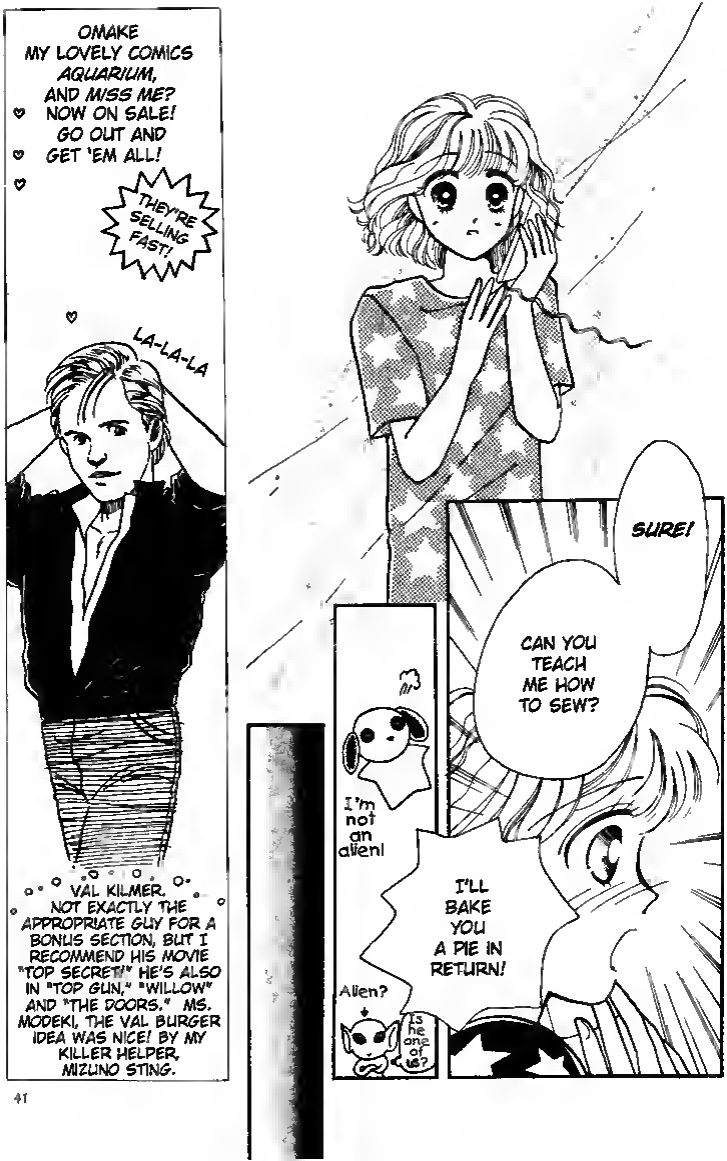

WE'RE JUST FRIENDS NOW.
WE USED TO DATE.
ウソウソ
じょーだーん
Just Kiddin'
THAT WAS A JOKE!
REALLY? WHAT HAPPENED?
HE'S AN AWFUL KISSER.

ROCKY WAS MY SECOND BOYFRIEND IN JAPAN,
BUT I'M IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE.
HE LIVES IN ROCKY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX.
ROCKY?
CHEATING.
NO...ME.
おんど
SILENCE
ERICA, YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T INTERESTED IN GUYS.
DON'T WE GO


I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THEY'RE NOT DATING ANYMORE.
GOOD NIGHT!
IT'S FUN TO BE IN LOVE.
WHEN HE'S IN SOPHIE'S APARTMENT, CHANCES ARE, THE GUY SHE REALLY LOVES WILL BE THERE TOO!


PHEW!
OPEN
ROCKY'S NOT DATING ANYBODY!
GOOD LUCK, ERICA!
RING RING
COULD IT BE...?
ドキドキ
ドキドキ
ドキドキ

A CALL FROM MR. KANEDA.
ERICA --
-- WHEN ARE YOU GOING BACK HOME AGAIN?
OH, REALLY?
I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING MY PARENTS AGAIN.
AS SOON AS SUMMER BREAK STARTS.
DO YOU WANT ME TO MAKE A NEW OUTFIT FOR YOUR ALIEN?
TODAY'S MY DAY OFF.
YOUR CURFEW IS ELEVEN, RIGHT?


OMAKE
MY LOVELY COMICS AQUARIUM, AND MISS ME? NOW ON SALE! GO OUT AND GET 'EM ALL!
THEY'RE SELLING FAST!
LA-LA-LA
VAL KILMER. NOT EXACTLY THE APPROPRIATE GUY FOR A BONUS SECTION, BUT I RECOMMEND HIS MOVIE "TOP SECRET!" HE'S ALSO IN "TOP GUN," "WILLOW" AND "THE DOORS." MS. MODEKI, THE VAL BURGER IDEA WAS NICE! BY MY KILLER HELPER, MIZUNO STING.
SURE!
CAN YOU TEACH ME HOW TO SEW?
I'LL BAKE YOU A PIE IN RETURN!
I'm not an alien!
Alien?
Is he one of us?

WILL YOU COME WITH ME, RENA?
NO, YOU HAVE TO GO BY YOURSELF THIS TIME!
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO FOR IT!
IT'S GOING TO LOOK AND TASTE GOOD THIS TIME!

THANK YOU SO MUCH.
YOU'RE PROBABLY WORN OUT FROM WORKING.
IT'S SO CUTE ON HIM!
SEWING
HE LOOKS SO GOOD!
MY PARENTS ARE PAYING MY RENT NOW, BUT...
IT'S NO PROBLEM. I'M GLAD THAT YOU LIKE IT. I HAD TO LEARN HOW TO SEW SO I COULD SAVE MONEY ON CLOTHES.
NEED TO SAVE UP IF I WANT TO MOVE TO L.A.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO TO L.A. AND BECOME A HUGE STAR.
WHEN DO YOU PLAN ON MAKING THE MOVE?

I HAVE TO SAVE UP LIKE CRAZY BEFORE THEN.
THEIR SCHOOL YEAR STARTS IN SEPTEMBER.
HE'S LEAVING IN SEPTEMBER!?
WAIT...

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE LEAVING SO--
--SOON.
WHEN I COME BACK FROM MY VACATION--
--ROCKY WILL BE GONE ALREADY!?

OH ROCKY...

OMAKE 2. THERE WAS A "MAKE YOUR OWN SANTARO" KIT MADE FOR FANS. I'VE HEARD REALLY COOL FEEDBACK FROM PEOPLE, LIKE "I MADE A NEW FRIEND WHEN I SPOTTED SOMEONE WITH A SANTARO!" I HAVE YET TO SEE ANYONE ELSE CARRYING ONE AROUND, BUT... MY FRIEND'S BOYFRIEND MADE A SANTARO, AND HE LIKES TO CARRY IT IN HIS SHIRT POCKET. HE CALLS HIM SNUGGLY. IF YOU SEE A TALL BLONDE GUY WITH A SANTARO DOLL IN HIS SHIRT POCKET, PLEASE SAY HI! YOU'LL SEE HIM AROUND CHIBA AND DISNEYLAND.

RECENTLY, I GOT INTO A CONVERSATION WITH A FRIEND FROM WORK. THE SUBJECT WAS, "WHAT KIND OF GIRLS DO YOU WANT AS FRIENDS?" NOW, DON'T GET ME WRONG. I AM A STRAIGHT WOMAN. IF I FALL IN LOVE, IT WILL BE WITH A MAN! I JUST WANTED TO CLARIFY THAT (GIGGLE)!

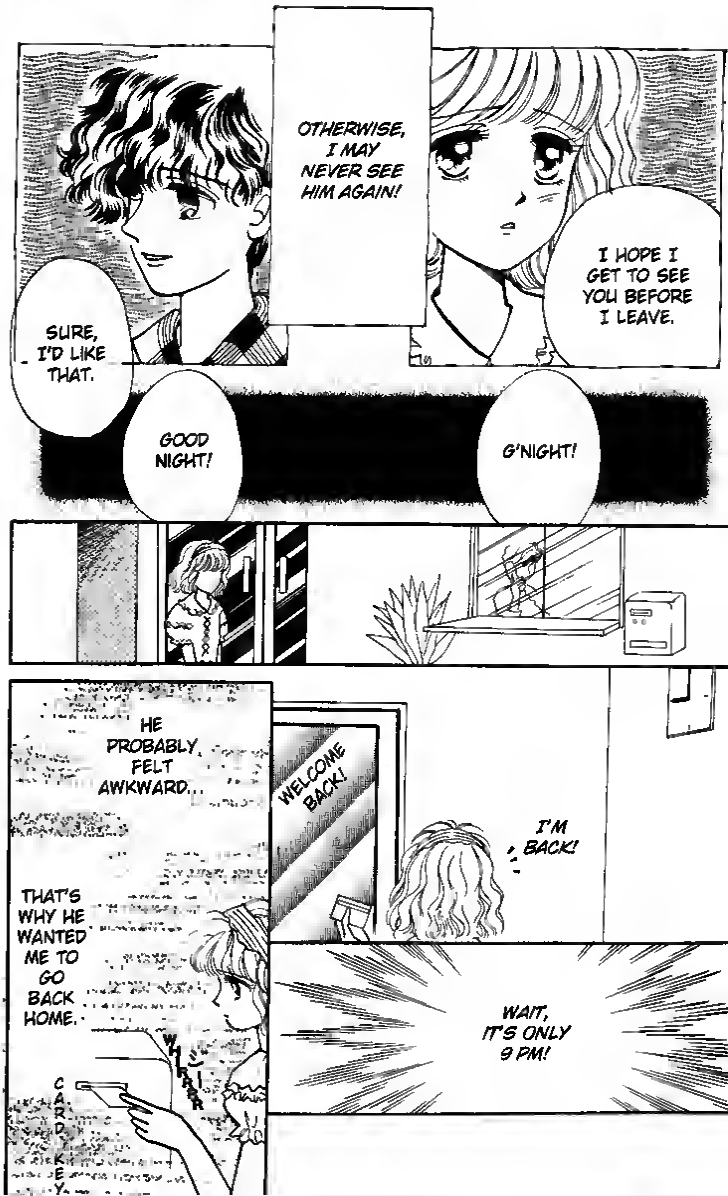
TO BE CONTINUED IN OMAKE 3!

I REALLY LIKE...
HE'S--
--THE FIRST GUY I'VE EVER LOVED!

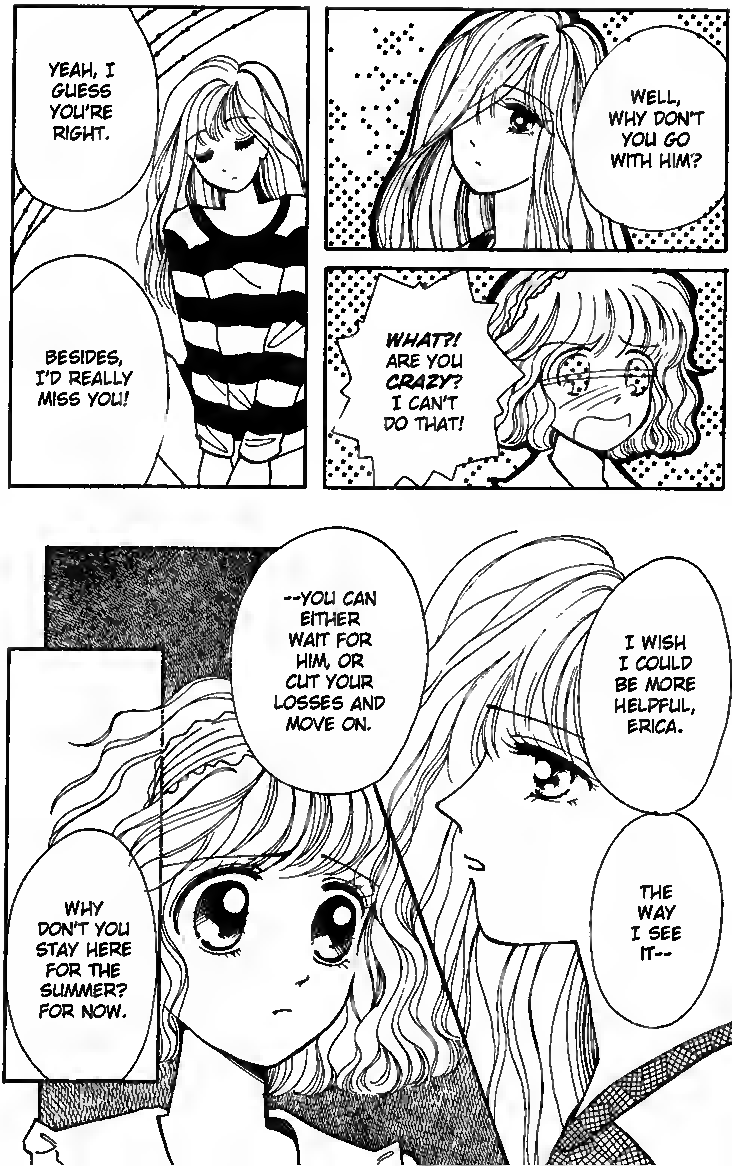
DASH
WE BROUGHT BOOZE!
knock knock
DAMN
K-TCHK
Hi Rocky How are you doin'?!
OOPS! WE DIDN'T MEAN TO DISTURB YOU!
IS THIS A BAD TIME!?
OH...
OH, OKAY.
I'LL WALK YOU BACK. IT'S GETTING LATE.
LOCK YOUR DOOR, DUDE!
SORRY! LATER!
YAK
YAK

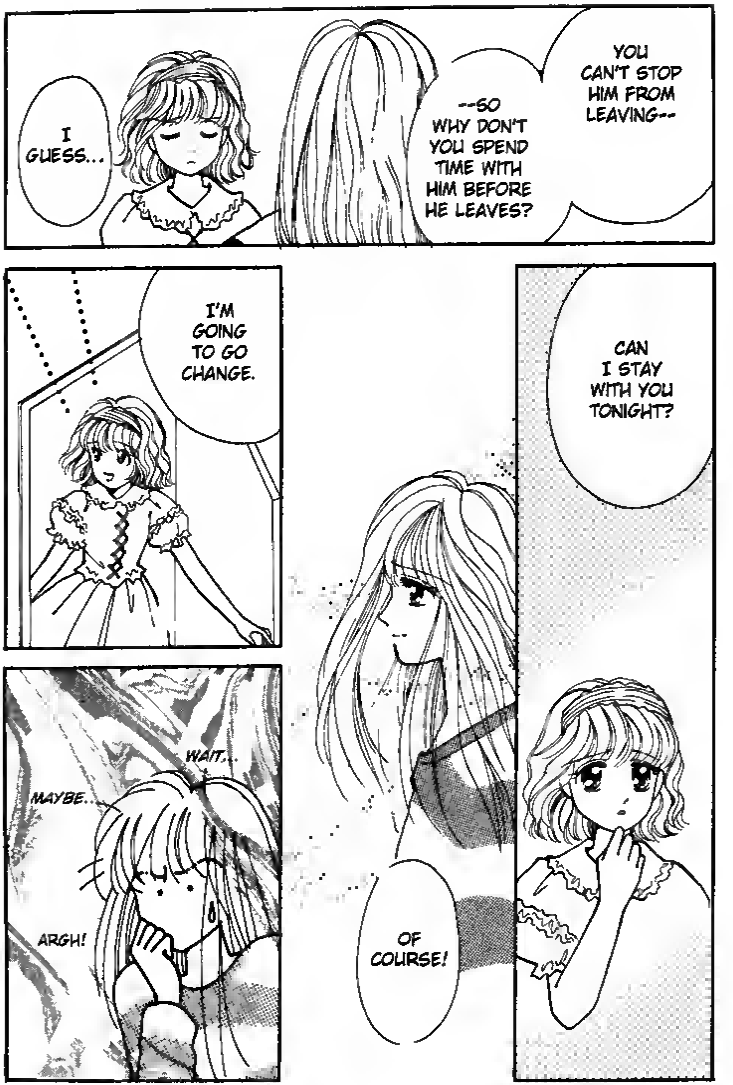
YOU'LL BE LATE FOR YOUR CURFEW! YOU'VE ONLY GOT 15 MINUTES! CURFEW'S ELEVEN, RIGHT?
OH MY GOD!

YOU THINK?
EVEN IF I WAS A GIRL, I COULDN'T HANDLE A CURFEW THAT EARLY!
I WOULD HAVE GONE BOY-CRAZY, LIKE SOPHIE!
WHEW! WELL, SEE YA LATER!
CATTLEYA
THUD
RUN
RUN
WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU'RE LATE?
I DON'T KNOW! THEY'LL PROBABLY JUST SCOLD ME A LITTLE!
RUSH
RUSH

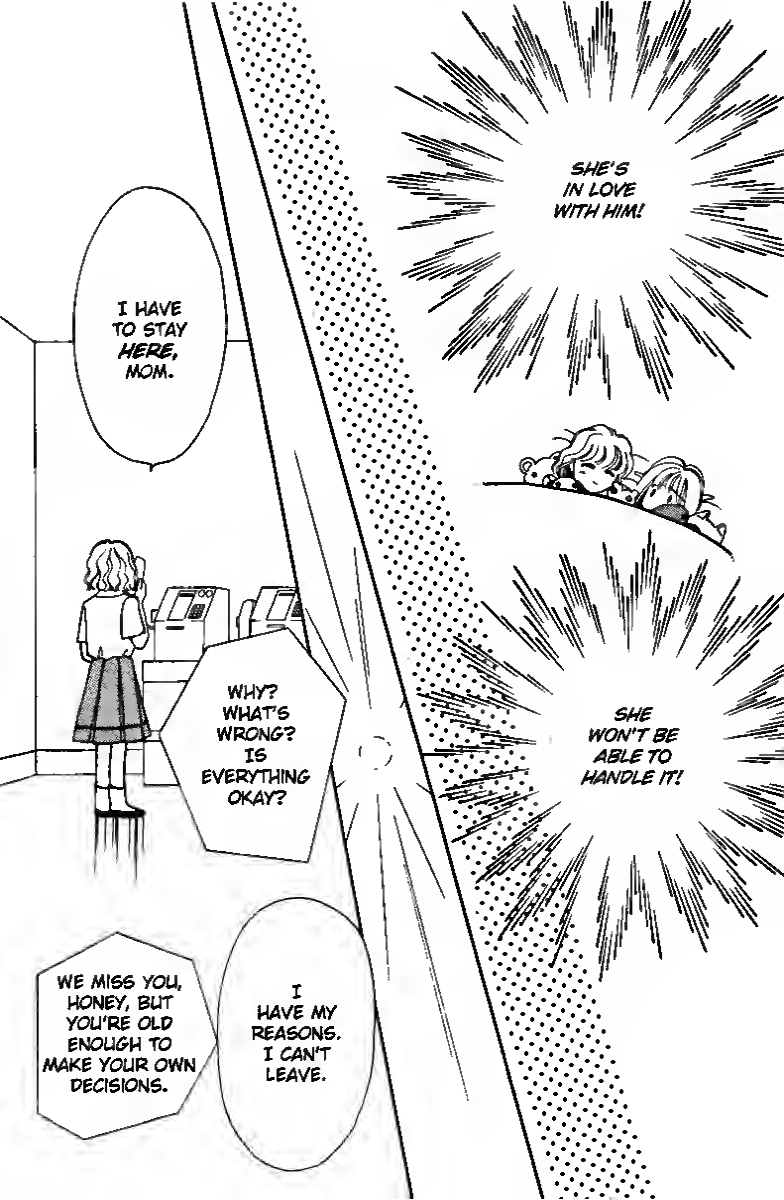

OTHERWISE, I MAY NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN!
I HOPE I GET TO SEE YOU BEFORE I LEAVE.
SURE, I'D LIKE THAT.
GOOD NIGHT!
G'NIGHT!
HE PROBABLY FELT AWKWARD...
THAT'S WHY HE WANTED ME TO GO BACK HOME.
WELCOME BACK!
I'M BACK!
WAIT, IT'S ONLY 9 PM!
WHERE
CARD KEY

RENA!
ERICA, YOU'RE BACK! HOW WAS IT?
AW, I'M SORRY, DEAR. THAT REALLY SUCKS.


YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
BESIDES, I'D REALLY MISS YOU!
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU GO WITH HIM?
WHAT?! ARE YOU CRAZY? I CAN'T DO THAT!
--YOU CAN EITHER WAIT FOR HIM, OR CUT YOUR LOSSES AND MOVE ON.
I WISH I COULD BE MORE HELPFUL, ERICA.
WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE FOR THE SUMMER? FOR NOW.
THE WAY I SEE IT--

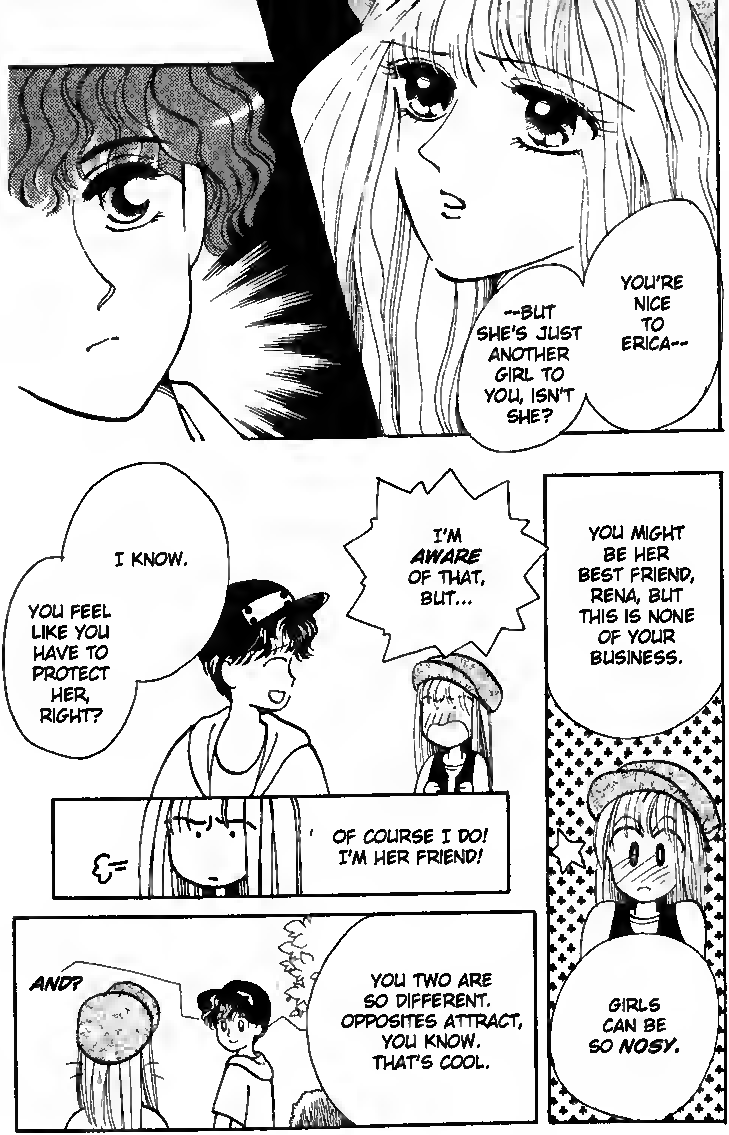

I GUESS...
--SO WHY DON'T YOU SPEND TIME WITH HIM BEFORE HE LEAVES?
YOU CAN'T STOP HIM FROM LEAVING--
I'M GOING TO GO CHANGE.
CAN I STAY WITH YOU TONIGHT?
WAIT...
MAYBE...
ARGH!
OF COURSE!

I KNEW IT!
IT'S A TWIN SIZE BED!
I'M BACK!
TA-DAH!
ぎゅっ!
Long time no see, guys!
I can't move!
SQUEEZE
ギュウ
SCRUNCH
ギュウ
きゅっきゅっ
COOL!
ERICA GETS ATTACHED SO EASILY...

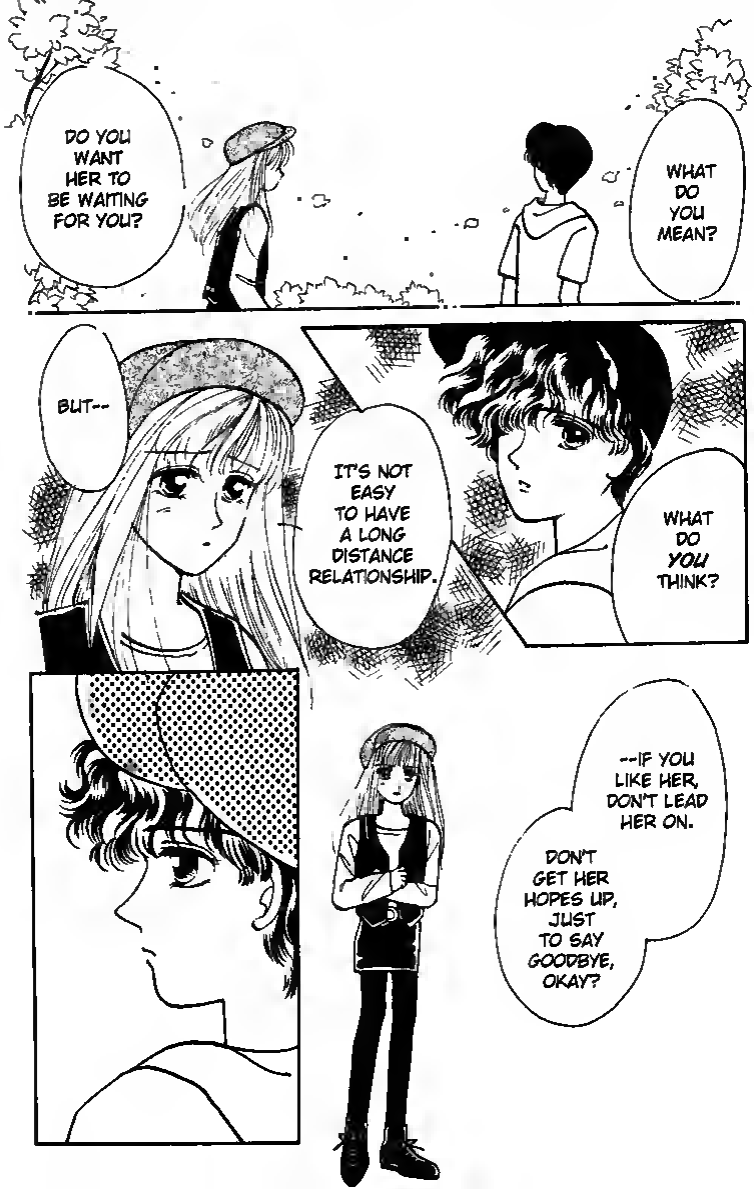

SHE'S IN LOVE WITH HIM!
I HAVE TO STAY HERE, MOM.
WHY? WHAT'S WRONG? IS EVERYTHING OKAY?
SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT!
I HAVE MY REASONS. I CAN'T LEAVE.
WE MISS YOU, HONEY, BUT YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS.

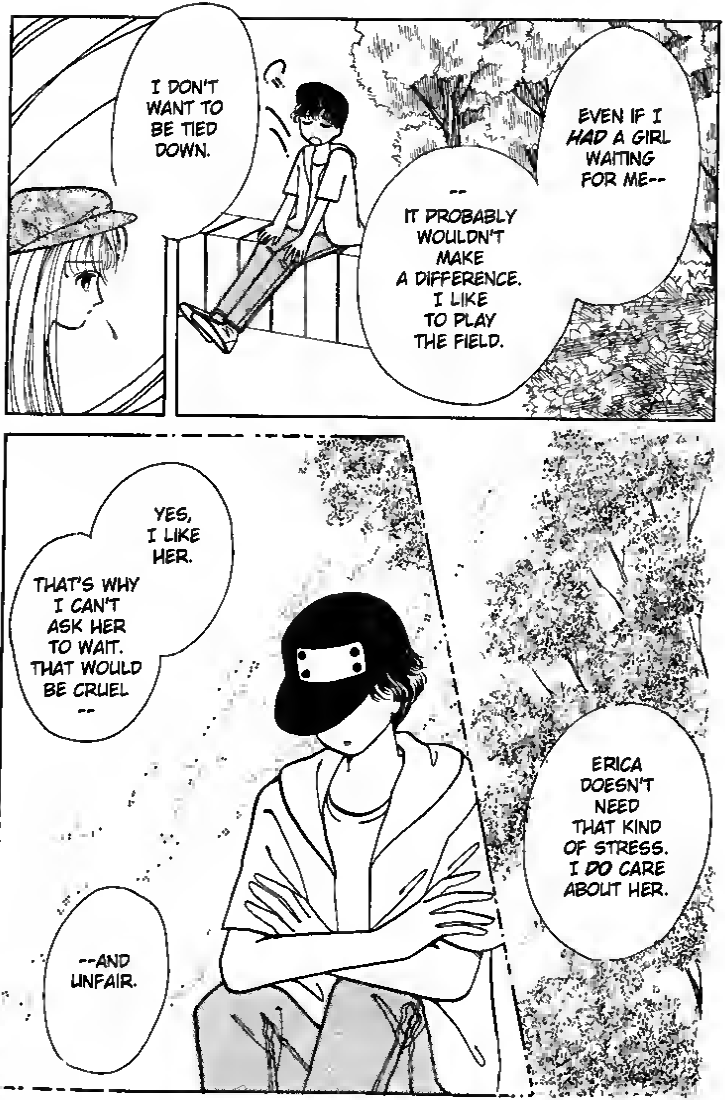
SEE? I KNEW SHE WOULD UNDERSTAND.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, RENA?
SHE SAID TO COME BACK AS SOON AS I TAKE CARE OF THINGS.
WHAT DID YOUR MOM SAY?
LOOKS LIKE THIS WILL BE A DEPRESSING SUMMER.
NOBODY'S ASKED ME TO COME BACK HOME.
I'LL STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE.

HEY!
OH!
ROCKY, YOU JERK!
HUH?! WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE READY TO KILL ME!
Marukoshi Groceries
ROCKY, YOU'VE BEEN WITH A LOT OF GIRLS, RIGHT?
WHO TOLD YOU THAT?!
IT'S VERY OBVIOUS.

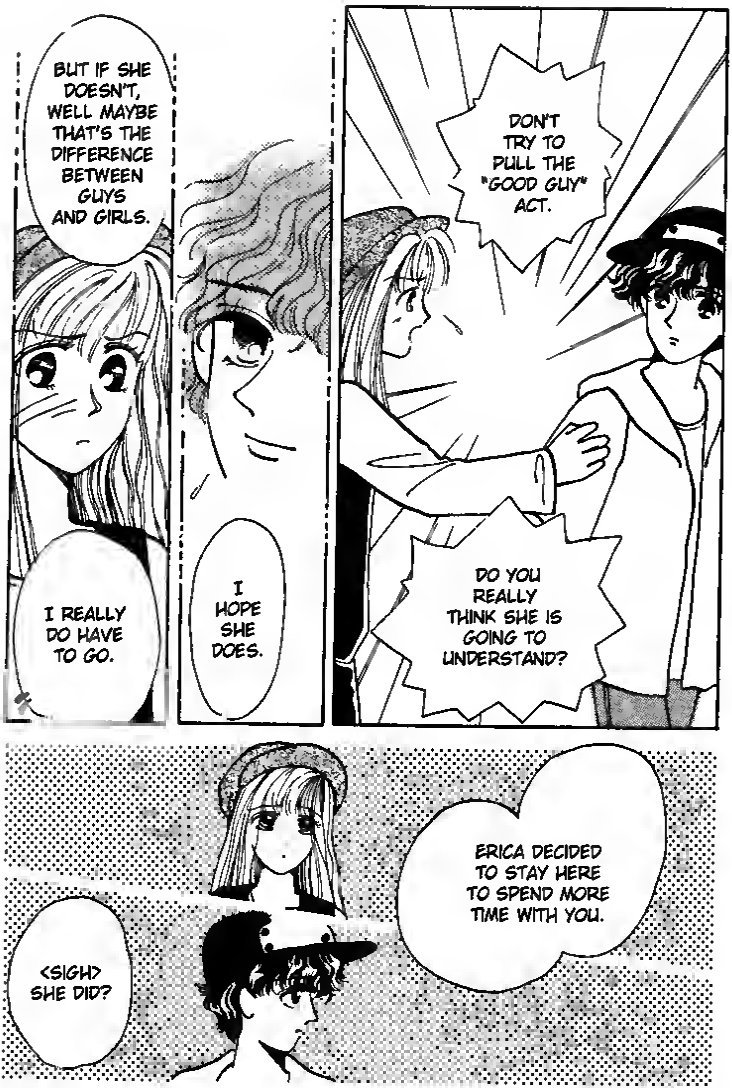

YOU'RE NICE TO ERICA--
--BUT SHE'S JUST ANOTHER GIRL TO YOU, ISN'T SHE?
YOU MIGHT BE HER BEST FRIEND, RENA, BUT THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
I'M AWARE OF THAT, BUT...
I KNOW. YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO PROTECT HER, RIGHT?
OF COURSE I DO! I'M HER FRIEND!
GIRLS CAN BE SO NOSY.
AND?
YOU TWO ARE SO DIFFERENT. OPPOSITES ATTRACT, YOU KNOW. THAT'S COOL.

DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ERICA.
BESIDES --
-- SHE'S TOO INNOCENT FOR ME.
YOU SEEM LIKE A PARTY GIRL!
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE ANOTHER STORY.
HEY, YOU HAVE THE WRONG IDEA...
LISTEN, I GOTTA GO TO WORK.
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT ERICA?


DO YOU WANT HER TO BE WAITING FOR YOU?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
BUT--
IT'S NOT EASY TO HAVE A LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP.
WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?
--IF YOU LIKE HER, DON'T LEAD HER ON.
DON'T GET HER HOPES UP, JUST TO SAY GOODBYE, OKAY?

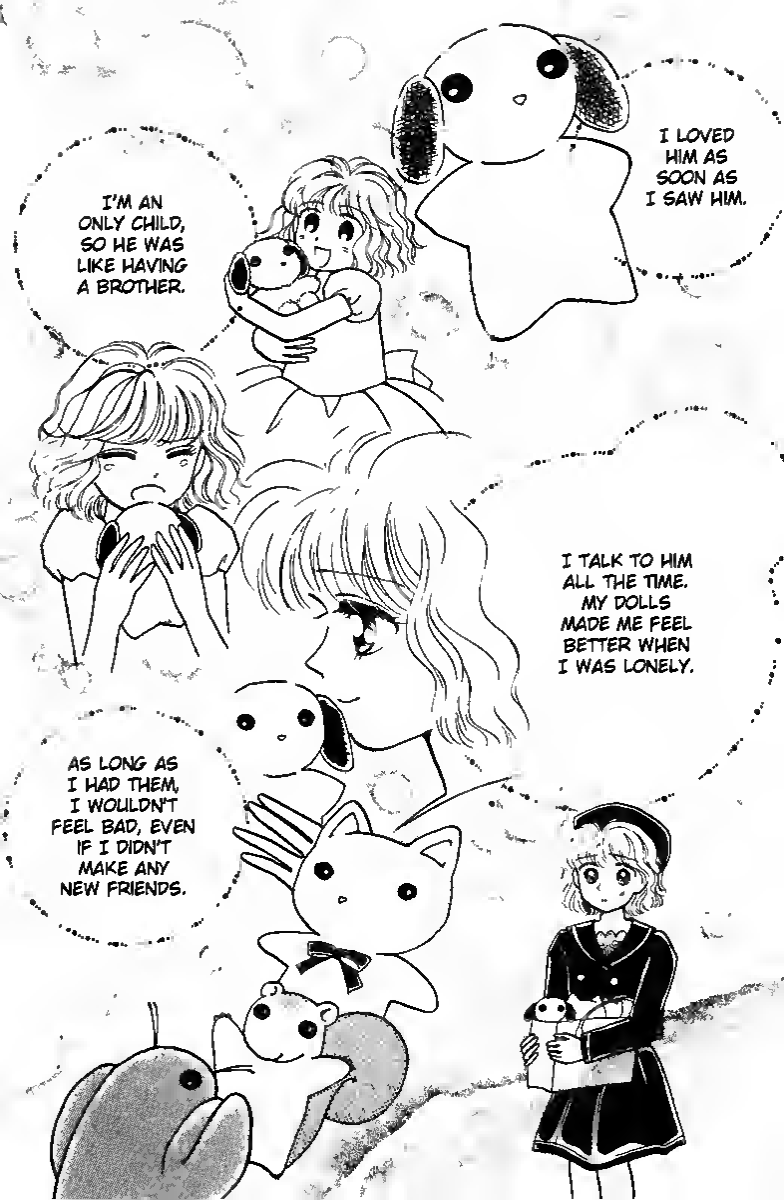

I DON'T WANT TO BE TIED DOWN.
EVEN IF I *HAD* A GIRL WAITING FOR ME--
--
IT PROBABLY WOULDN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I LIKE TO PLAY THE FIELD.
YES, I LIKE HER.
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T ASK HER TO WAIT. THAT WOULD BE CRUEL --
ERICA DOESN'T NEED THAT KIND OF STRESS. I *DO* CARE ABOUT HER.
--AND UNFAIR.

WHY AM I TELLING YOU THIS?
COME ON, SHE'S STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL. THERE ARE PLENTY OF GUYS OUT THERE FOR HER.
SO YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE, AND THAT'S IT?
I THINK THAT'S EVEN WORSE!

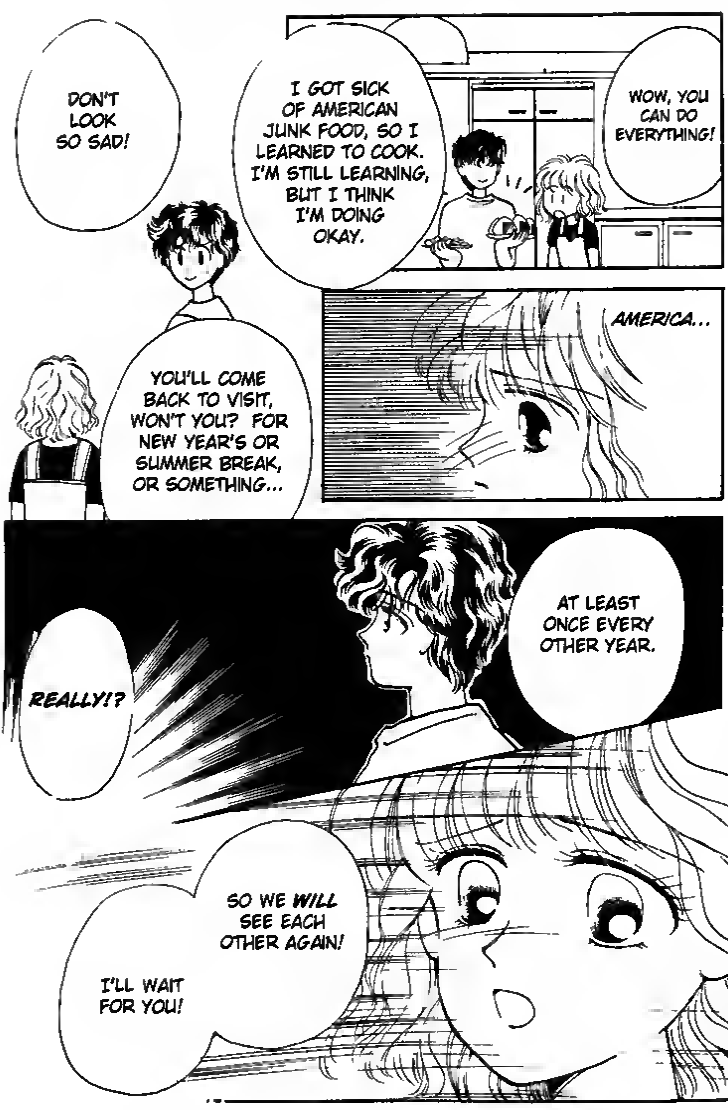

BUT IF SHE DOESN'T, WELL MAYBE THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GUYS AND GIRLS.
I REALLY DO HAVE TO GO.
I HOPE SHE DOES.
DON'T TRY TO PULL THE "GOOD GUY" ACT.
DO YOU REALLY THINK SHE IS GOING TO UNDERSTAND?
ERICA DECIDED TO STAY HERE TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOU.
<SIGH> SHE DID?

OMAKE
"OMAKOMI WINK," A DUET WITH MS. MIKA KOTO. THE SECOND SONG, "BOKU WA TENSHI JA NAI (I'M NO ANGEL) IS FEATURED IN "MIKA KOTO EXPO '91." I WON'T MAKE EXCUSES LIKE "IT WASN'T THE RIGHT RANGE" OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT THIS TIME (LAUGH). I'M JUST HAPPY THAT THIS IS THROUGH VAP, THE SAME COMPANY AS KAMACHI!
I'LL TRY TO SPEND AS MUCH TIME WITH HER AFTER WORK AS POSSIBLE, OK?
I KNOW THESE TWO ILLUSTRATIONS ARE STYLISTICALLY VERY DIFFERENT (ONE WAS DRAWN IN LATER).

WHAT?
LET ME SEW IT UP FOR YOU.
HIS NECK IS A BIT WORN OUT.
I WILL. WHY DOES IT MATTER SO MUCH?
BE GENTLE, OKAY?
SANTARO, BRAND NEW.
SANTARO WAS A GIFT FROM MY GRANDMA. SHE PASSED AWAY A WHILE BACK.

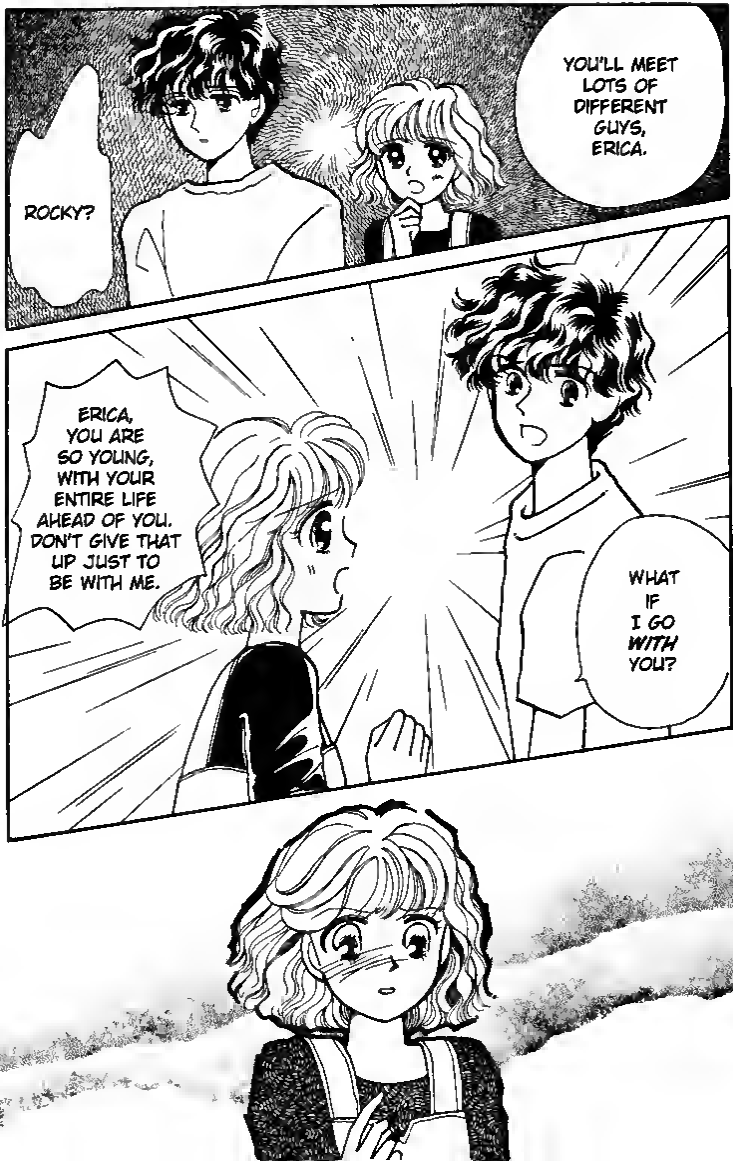

I LOVED HIM AS SOON AS I SAW HIM.
I'M AN ONLY CHILD, SO HE WAS LIKE HAVING A BROTHER.
I TALK TO HIM ALL THE TIME. MY DOLLS MADE ME FEEL BETTER WHEN I WAS LONELY.
AS LONG AS I HAD THEM, I WOULDN'T FEEL BAD, EVEN IF I DIDN'T MAKE ANY NEW FRIENDS.

ERICA, YOU'LL NEVER HAVE PROBLEMS MAKING FRIENDS.
!!
SIZZLE
Can't he be nice for once?
Enough already!
FLOP
FLOP
FLOP
SO, THIS FLOPPY ALIEN SERVES AS YOUR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, HUH?


DON'T LOOK SO SAD!
I GOT SICK OF AMERICAN JUNK FOOD, SO I LEARNED TO COOK. I'M STILL LEARNING, BUT I THINK I'M DOING OKAY.
WOW, YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING!
AMERICA...
YOU'LL COME BACK TO VISIT, WON'T YOU? FOR NEW YEAR'S OR SUMMER BREAK, OR SOMETHING...
AT LEAST ONCE EVERY OTHER YEAR.
REALLY!?
SO WE WILL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN!
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU!

ERICA, PLEASE DON'T DO THAT.
PLEASE DON'T WAIT FOR ME.

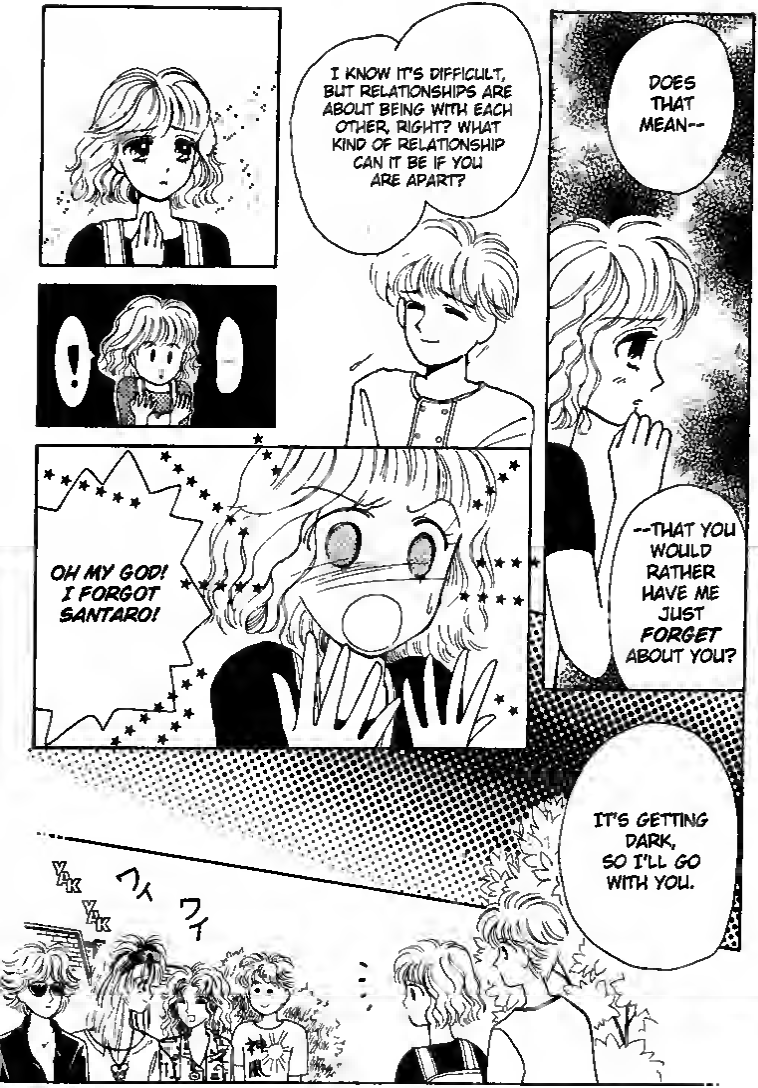
DON'T WAIT AROUND FOR A GUY THAT'S ONLY GOING TO BE AROUND ONCE A YEAR.
MY ACTING CAREER IS VERY IMPORTANT AND SERIOUS TO ME.
IF I WERE TO STAY HERE--
--YOU WOULD BECOME THE MOST IMPORTANT GIRL IN MY LIFE.
BUT I'LL BE SO FAR AWAY. THAT IS NO WAY TO BE WITH SOMEONE. I'M SORRY.


YOU'LL MEET LOTS OF DIFFERENT GUYS, ERICA.
ROCKY?
ERICA, YOU ARE SO YOUNG, WITH YOUR ENTIRE LIFE AHEAD OF YOU. DON'T GIVE THAT UP JUST TO BE WITH ME.
WHAT IF I GO *WITH* YOU?

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
バン!
BAM!

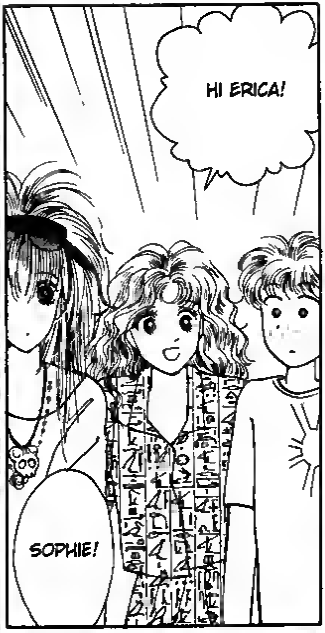
WHY DOESN'T HE WANT ME TO WAIT FOR HIM?
RING
WHY?
MINORU!!
ERICA, WHAT'S WRONG?
MINORU'S MOM
SHE'LL BE OKAY.
WHAT'S WRONG, ERICA?

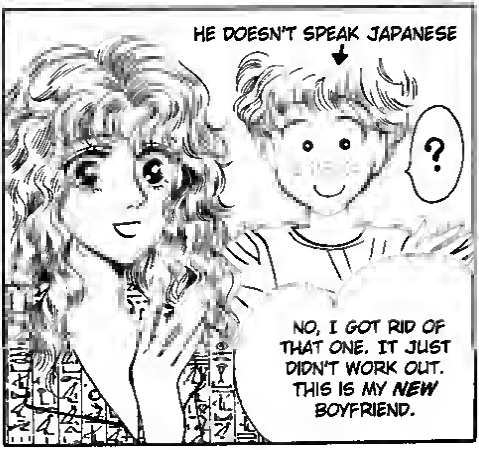
I UNDERSTAND ROCKY'S REASONS. MAYBE IT'S A GUY THING.
I THINK HE LIKES YOU, ERICA.
BUT THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.
SOMETIMES, GUYS NEED TO CHASE AFTER A GOAL.
YOU CAN'T MAKE PROMISES WHEN YOUR OWN *LIFE* IS SO UNCERTAIN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ...
WOULD YOU ACT THE SAME WAY IF *YOU* WERE IN HIS PLACE?
HAVING SOMEONE "WAITING" COULD SEEM LIKE A BURDEN.
I DON'T KNOW. I MIGHT.

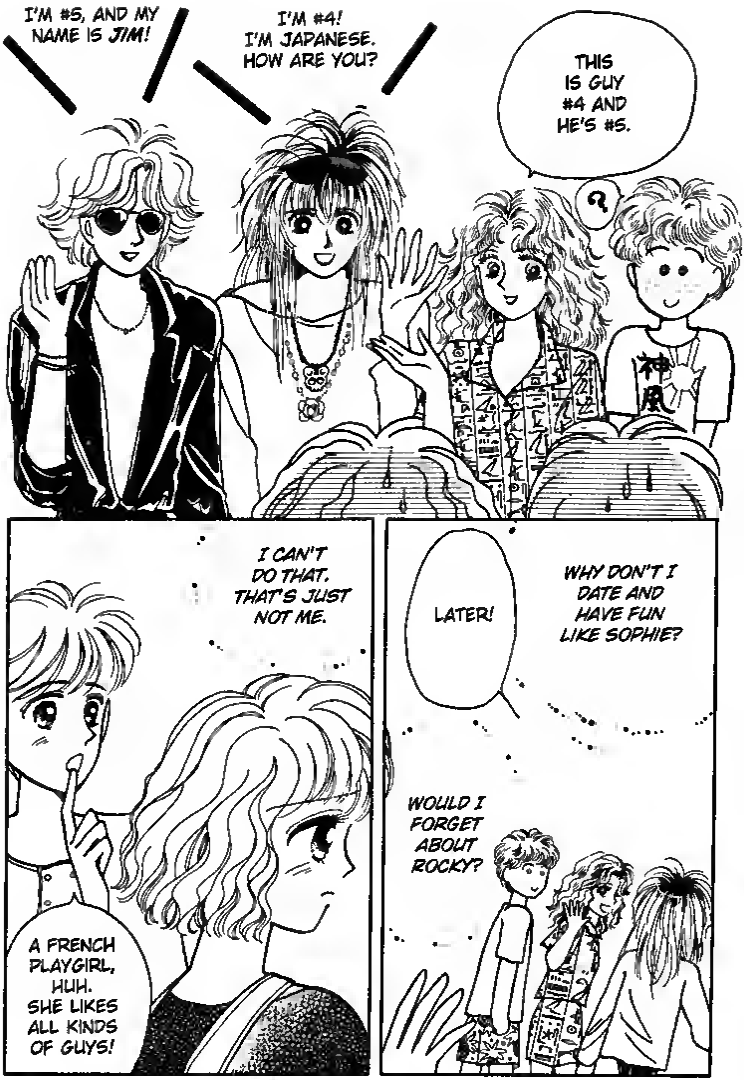

I KNOW IT'S DIFFICULT, BUT RELATIONSHIPS ARE ABOUT BEING WITH EACH OTHER, RIGHT? WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP CAN IT BE IF YOU ARE APART?
DOES THAT MEAN--
--THAT YOU WOULD RATHER HAVE ME JUST FORGET ABOUT YOU?
OH MY GOD! I FORGOT SANTARO!
IT'S GETTING DARK, SO I'LL GO WITH YOU.
ワイ ワイ ワイ

OMAKE 3

JUST LIKE I MENTIONED IN VOL. 1, I LIKE GIRLS LIKE RENA. TALL, SKINNY AND PRETTY. THE TYPE THAT PEOPLE HAVE A HARD TIME APPROACHING, BUT ARE VERY SWEET AND CARING IN PERSON. MY FRIEND SAID SHE WOULD LIKE SOMEONE LIKE KYON-CHAN (DRUMS) FROM PRI2. I WOULD DEFINITELY PREFER KANA CHAN (GUITAR)! WAIT, I LIKE KAORI, TOO. NEVER MIND. I'M JUST JABBERING. IT'S JUST THAT KAORI'S REALLY UPBEAT, A BIT CHUBBY, TALENTED AND SUPER CUTE, TOO! SHE'S VERY FLASHY, BUT SHE SEEMS REALLY SERIOUS WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS. I THINK THAT'S REALLY COOL! I LIKE ALL THE MEMBERS OF PRI2, THOUGH. I GUESS I HAVE HIGHER STANDARDS FOR MY FEMALE FRIENDS COMPARED TO MY MALE FRIENDS. RECENTLY, I LIKE FUNNY, ROCKER GUYS AS FRIENDS. (I WANT THEIR PERFORMANCE TO MAKE ME CRY AT THEIR SHOWS, THOUGH).

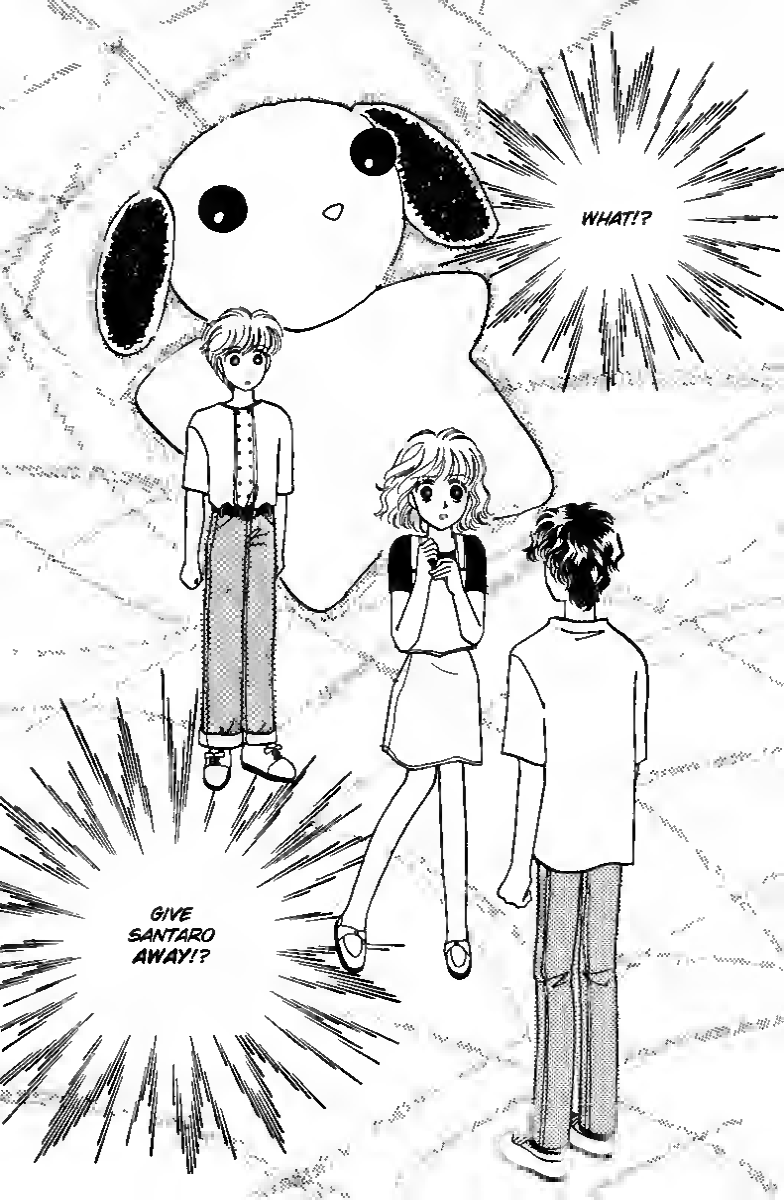


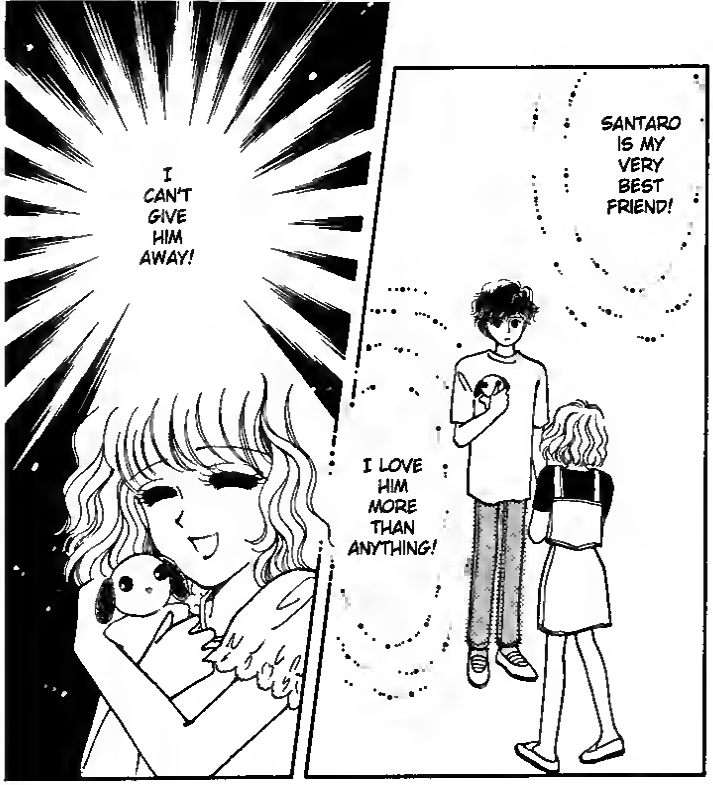



I'M #5, AND MY NAME IS JIM!
I'M #4! I'M JAPANESE. HOW ARE YOU?
THIS IS GUY #4 AND HE'S #5.
?
神風
I CAN'T DO THAT. THAT'S JUST NOT ME.
A FRENCH PLAYGIRL, HUH. SHE LIKES ALL KINDS OF GUYS!
LATER!
WHY DON'T I DATE AND HAVE FUN LIKE SOPHIE?
WOULD I FORGET ABOUT ROCKY?

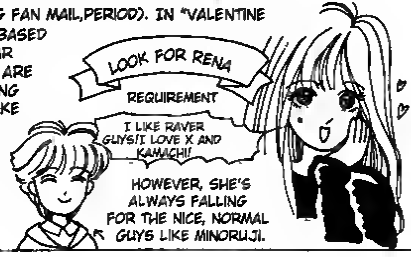
ピンポーン
RRRRING
I'LL WAIT OUTSIDE.
YOU FORGOT YOUR PRECIOUS SANTARO.
--WOULD YOU EVER PART WITH SANTARO?
HEY, ERICA--

I MEAN, WOULD YOU CHOOSE SANTARO OVER ME?
IF YOU LET ME HAVE SANTARO--
--AS PROOF THAT YOU'LL WAIT FOR ME--
I... I WANT YOU TO WAIT FOR ME.
--I'LL WAIT FOR YOU, TOO.


WHAT!?
GIVE SANTARO AWAY!?



OMKEY— I GET A LOT OF LETTERS LIKE, "RENA REMINDS ME OF MY FRIEND" OR "ERICA'S JUST LIKE ME." THAT MAKES ME VERY HAPPY (I LIKE RECEIVING FAN MAIL, PERIOD). IN "VALENTINE FOR DAD," SHIORI'S CHARACTER IS BASED ON KANAKO NAKAYAMA. SIMILAR CHARACTERS IN MY OTHER SERIES ARE BASED ON HER, TOO. I'M TALKING ABOUT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, LIKE HAIRSTYLE AND MOOD, RATHER THAN PERSONALITY. LOOK THROUGH MY OTHER SERIES AND I'M SURE YOU CAN SPOT THEM!


LOOK FOR RENA REQUIREMENT
I LIKE RAVER GUYS!I LOVE Y AND KAMACHI!
HOWEVER, SHE'S ALWAYS FALLING FOR THE NICE, NORMAL GUYS LIKE MINORU-JI.

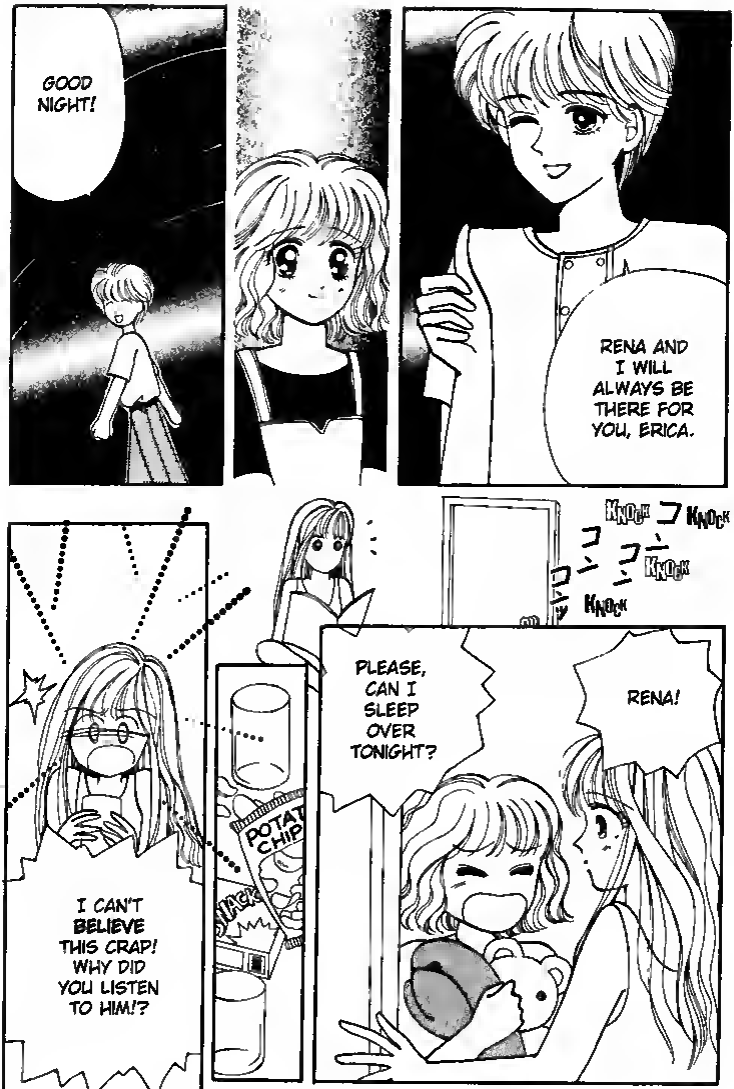
I LOVE YOU, SANTARO, BUT...
O... OKAY.
BUT--
-- ROCKY WILL WAIT FOR ME...

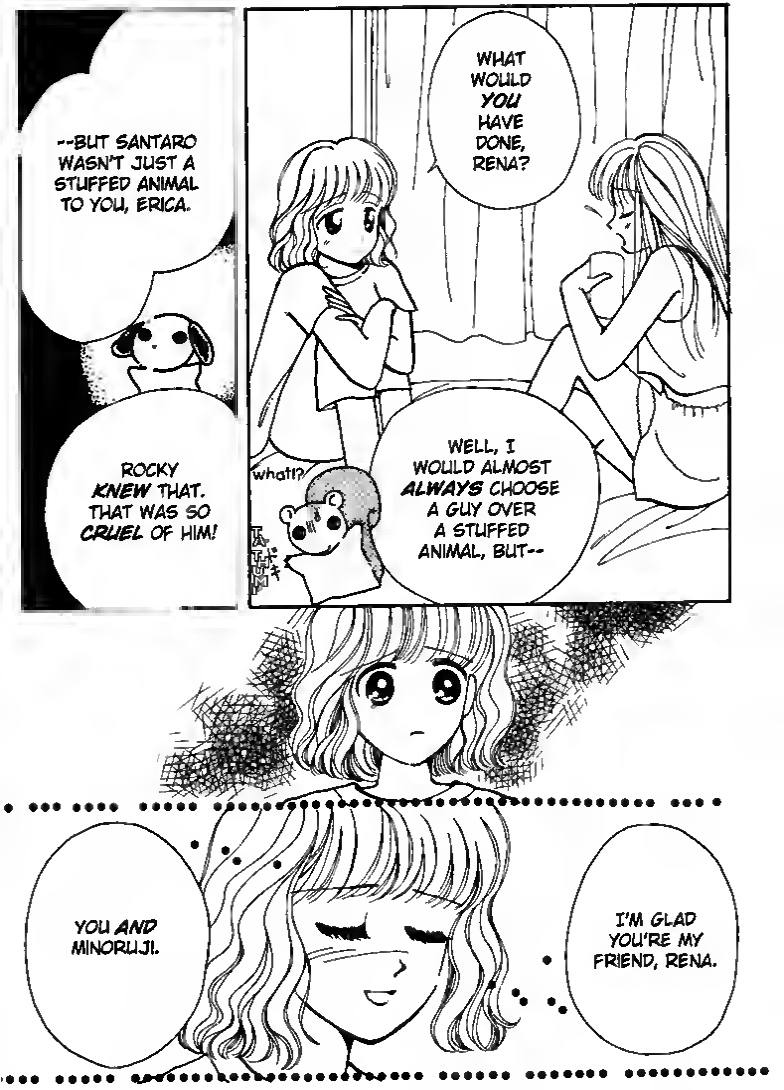
IF I LEAVE SANTARO WITH YOU, DO YOU PROMISE THAT WE WILL WAIT FOR EACH OTHER?
IT'S OKAY, MINORUJI.
I'M NOT THROWING SANTARO AWAY.
SINCE I CAN'T GO WITH ROCKY, SANTARO IS GOING TO TAKE MY PLACE.
ERICA, *WAIT!*
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S *UNFAIR*, ROCKY?

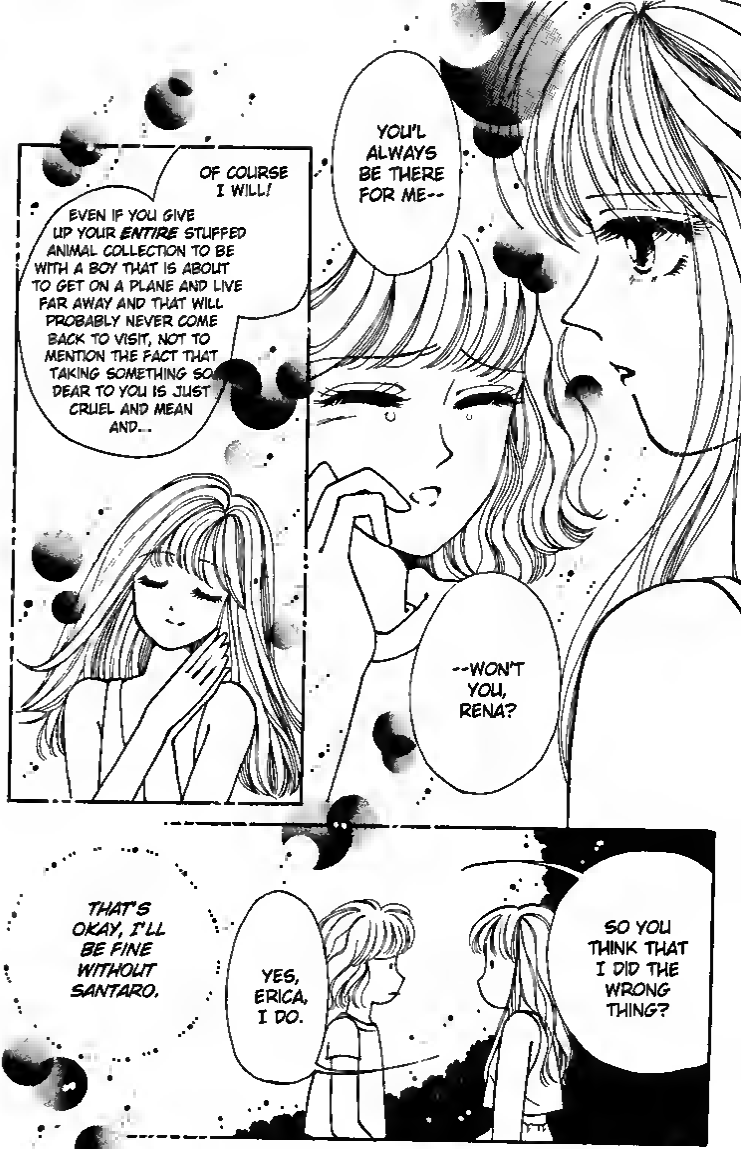
I SWEAR.
ROCKY WILL TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM, WON'T YOU, ROCKY?
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.
ME TOO.

ERICA, YOU'LL BE LATE FOR YOUR CURFEW. WE HAVE TO GO.
BYE, SANTARO. I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN.

ARE YOU OKAY, ERICA?
THANK YOU, MINORU-JI.


GOOD NIGHT!
RENA AND I WILL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU, ERICA.
KNOCK KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
PLEASE, CAN I SLEEP OVER TONIGHT?
RENA!
POTATO CHIP
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS CRAP! WHY DID YOU LISTEN TO HIM!?


--BUT SANTARO WASN'T JUST A STUFFED ANIMAL TO YOU, ERICA.
ROCKY KNEW THAT. THAT WAS SO CRUEL OF HIM!
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE, RENA?
what!?
WELL, I WOULD ALMOST ALWAYS CHOOSE A GUY OVER A STUFFED ANIMAL, BUT--
YOU AND MINORUJI.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE MY FRIEND, RENA.

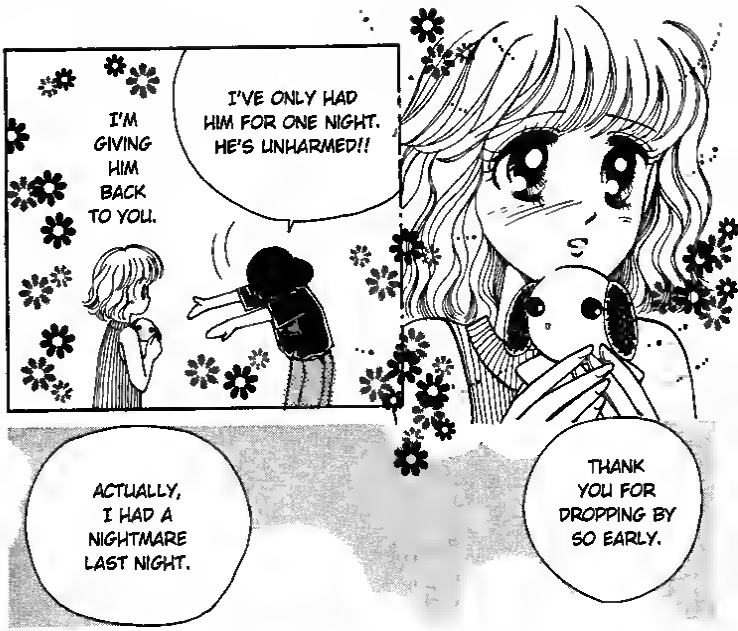

YOU'L ALWAYS BE THERE FOR ME--
--WON'T YOU, RENA?
OF COURSE I WILL!
EVEN IF YOU GIVE UP YOUR ENTIRE STUFFED ANIMAL COLLECTION TO BE WITH A BOY THAT IS ABOUT TO GET ON A PLANE AND LIVE FAR AWAY AND THAT WILL PROBABLY NEVER COME BACK TO VISIT, NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT TAKING SOMETHING SO DEAR TO YOU IS JUST CRUEL AND MEAN AND...
SO YOU THINK THAT I DID THE WRONG THING?
YES, ERICA, I DO.
THAT'S OKAY, I'LL BE FINE WITHOUT SANTARO.

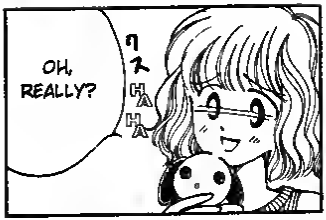
I HAVE GOOD FRIENDS TO SUPPORT ME.
I'LL BE FINE!
THAT NIGHT,
I HAD A DREAM ABOUT SANTARO.
I hate sleeping in the same bed with a guy!
Mom, I'm so lonely!
VERY THICK
HE HAD A FUNNY ACCENT, JUST LIKE ROCKY.
WAAAH!
You sold me out for a stupid guy! I miss you!

I'M SORRY, SANTARO!
I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE!
I COULDN'T CHOOSE BETWEEN YOU AND ROCKY!
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO!
HUFF はあ
PUFF はあ
TOK
TOK
TOK

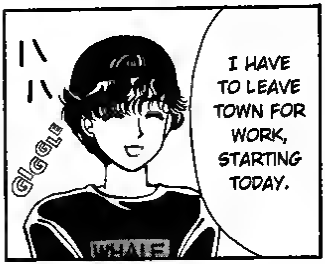
HI! I WAS GOING TO DROP BY BEFORE WORK.
I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE ASLEEP. IT'S 7 AM!
ROCKY...
SANTARO!
I WAS GONG TO LEAVE HIM AT THE FRONT DESK.

WHAT!? YOU'RE RETURNING HIM TO ME?
TO BE HONEST--
--I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE GOING TO GIVE HIM TO ME.
I THOUGHT YOU WOULD TELL ME THAT I WAS BEING A JERK!
YOU WON, ERICA.
HA HA HA HA
YOU TOTALLY CALLED MY BLUFF.

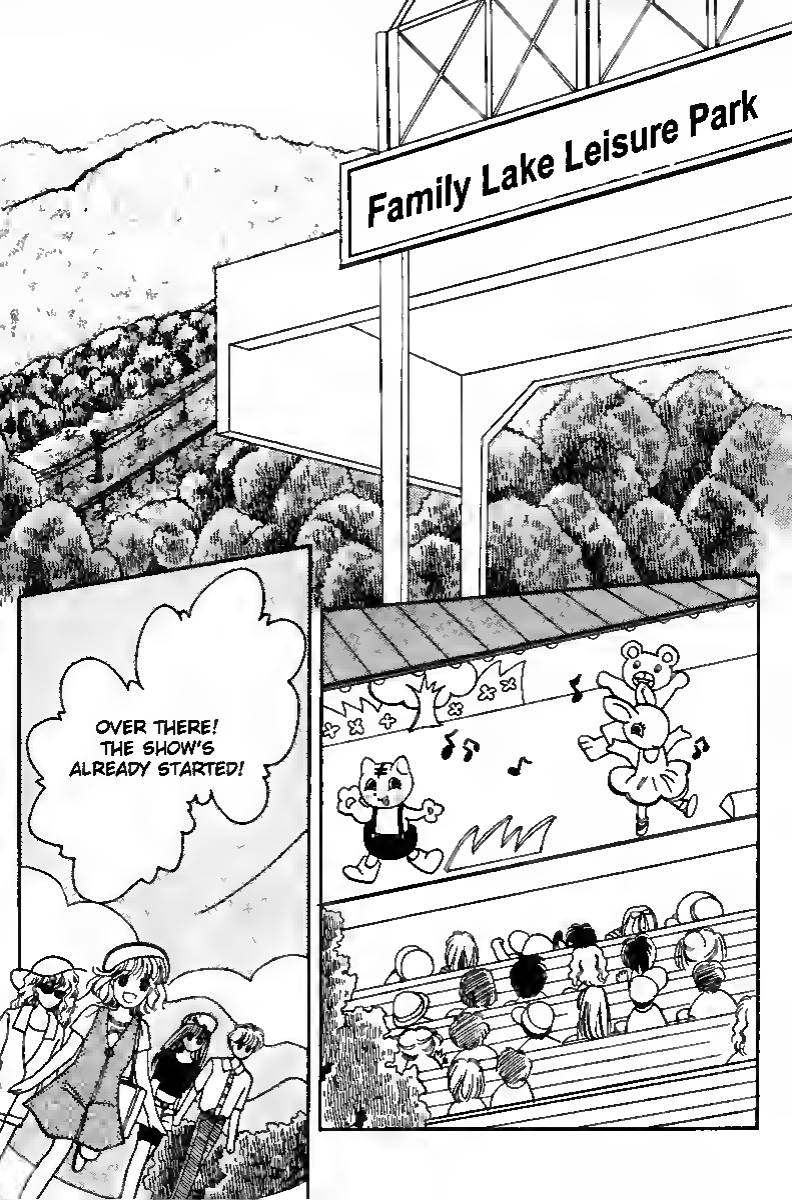

I'M GIVING HIM BACK TO YOU.
I'VE ONLY HAD HIM FOR ONE NIGHT. HE'S UNHARMED!!
THANK YOU FOR DROPPING BY SO EARLY.
ACTUALLY, I HAD A NIGHTMARE LAST NIGHT.


OH, REALLY?
ｸｽ HA HA

I HAD A DREAM ABOUT SANTARO CRYING AS HE WAS TELLING ME, "I DON'T LIKE YOU!"

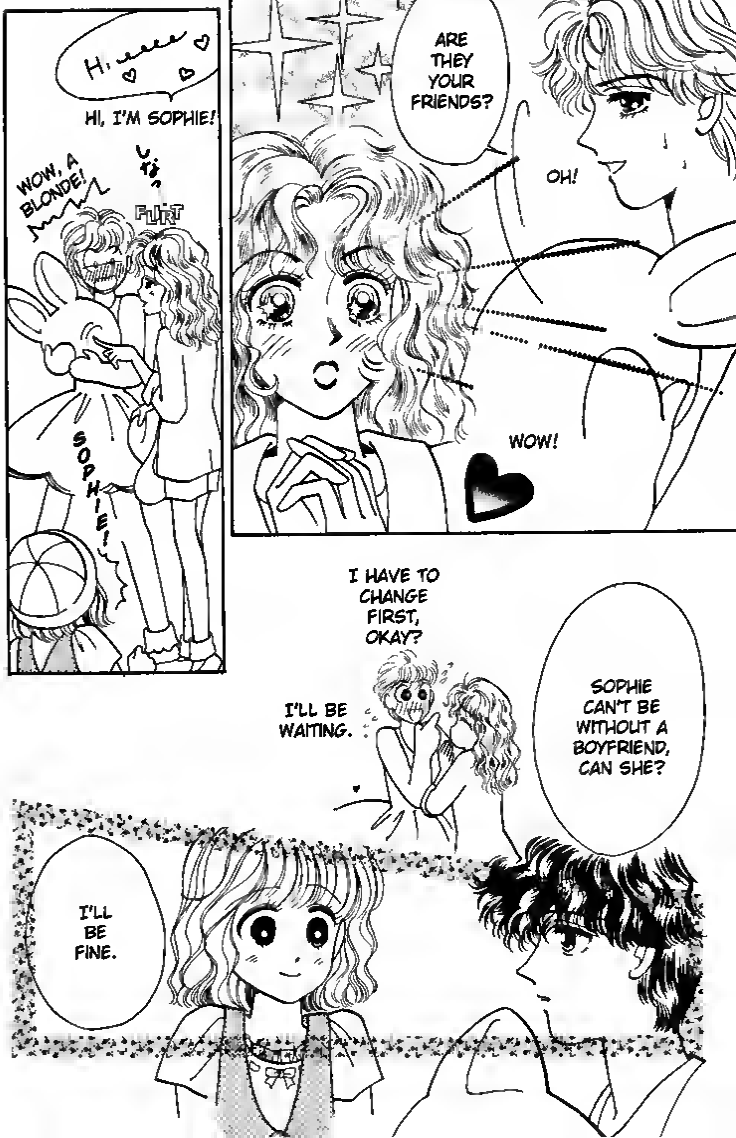

I HAVE TO LEAVE TOWN FOR WORK, STARTING TODAY.
GIGGL
WHALE

THEY REALLY LIKE ME AS MEOW MEOW.
THE "MEOW MEOW SHOW" IS GOING TO BE PERFORMING THERE.
YOU'VE HEARD OF FAMILY LAKE LEISURE PARK, RIGHT?
I HOPE IT'S NOT TOO LONG.
WOW! HOW LONG WILL YOU BE GONE?
I LEAVE TODAY. THE SHOW IS TOMORROW, THEN I'LL BE ON VACATION THERE WITH MY FRIENDS FOR A WEEK. IT'S A RESORT AREA.
WAIT...
FAMILY LAKE LEISURE PARK...?
I'LL CALL YOU. BYE!
I WAS RIGHT!
CONVENIENCE STORE


Family Lake Leisure Park
OVER THERE! THE SHOW'S ALREADY STARTED!

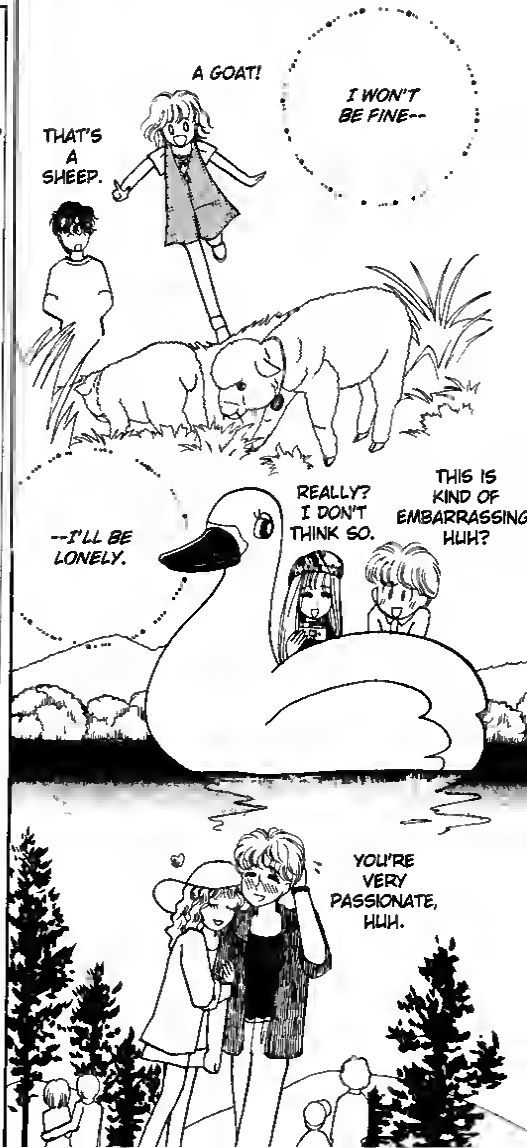
HUH!?
WOO HOO!
GO MEOW MEOW!
HEY, THIS IS A SURPRISE! WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE?
ACTUALLY, MY PARENTS LIVE NEAR HERE.

I BROUGHT EVERYBODY WITH ME.
WHEN YOU'RE DONE, LET'S ALL HANG OUT.
ARE YOU THIRSTY? I'LL GO GET JUICE.
I'LL GO WITH YOU.
OH, OKAY. GET ME AN ORANGE SODA, PLEASE.
GOOD JOB! SEE YA TOMORROW!
THUD
THUD
CLUMSY RABBIT!

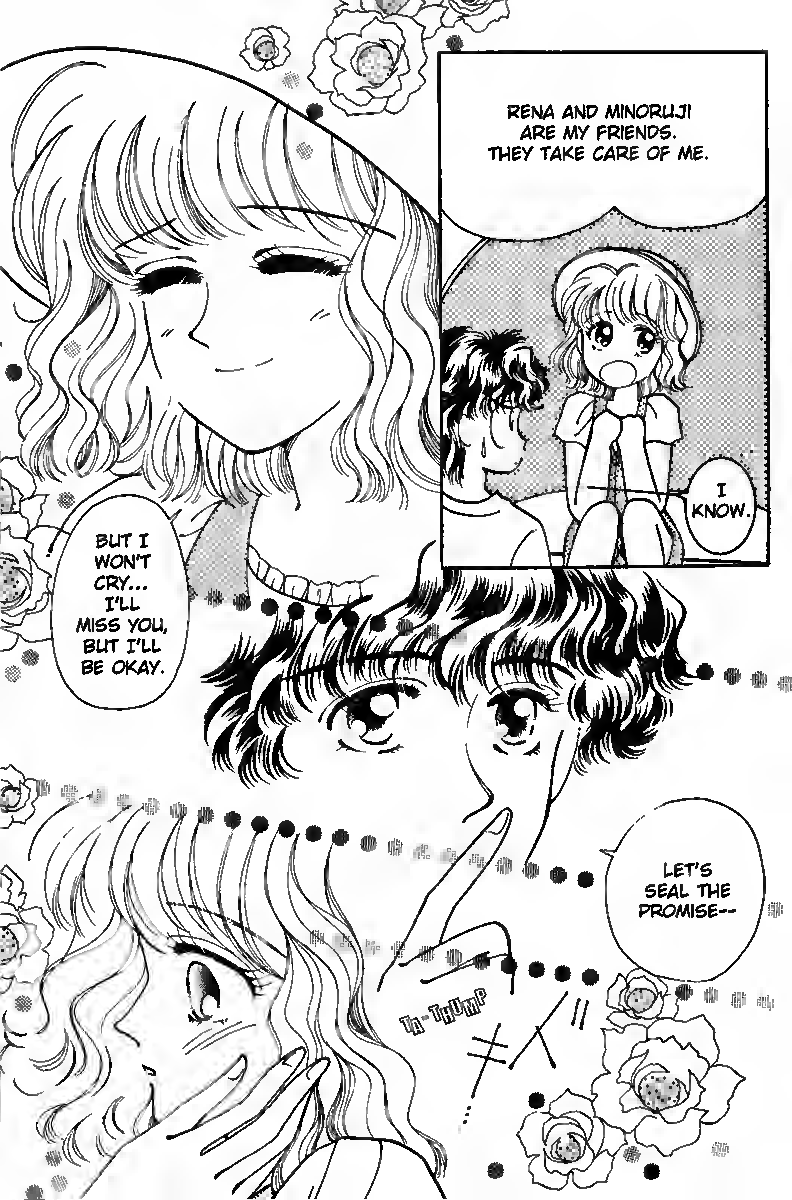

ARE THEY YOUR FRIENDS?
OH!
WOW!
I HAVE TO CHANGE FIRST, OKAY?
I'LL BE WAITING.
SOPHIE CAN'T BE WITHOUT A BOYFRIEND, CAN SHE?
I'LL BE FINE.
HI, I'M SOPHIE!
WOW, A BLONDE!
FLIRT
SOPHIE!

OMAKE 5.

IN "VALENTINE FOR DAD," SHIORI'S FATHER'S CHARACTER WAS BASED ON SEAN CONNERY! I REALLY LIKED DEVELOPING THE CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY, AND I LIKE ALL OF THEM! A LOT OF FATHERS WITH DAUGHTERS REALLY ENJOYED THIS STORY, TOO! IF YOU'RE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR FATHER, TRY READING THIS STORY ON VALENTINE'S DAY, OR ON YOUR FATHER'S BIRTHDAY. I THINK IT MIGHT GIVE YOU A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE? A PERFECT SONG TO LISTEN TO WHILE YOU'RE READING WOULD BE PRI2'S "PAPA (LYRICS BY KANA-CHAN)." TODAY'S ASSISTANT JUNKO NOGUCHI IS MY ASSISTANT OF THE DAY! I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MS. MODEKI AND MAYU SAKAMOTO FOR TAKING TIME OUT OF THEIR BUSY SCHEDULES TO HELP ME. THANKS TO MIWA MIZUNO FOR HER ILLUSTRATION OF FREDDIE MERCURY. I LIKED TO LISTEN TO SKANCHI AND QUEEN WHILE I WORKED. I CAN'T BELIEVE FREDDIE PASSED AWAY! LET'S GO SEE SKANCHI IN CONCERT TOGETHER, OKAY?



JUST, PLEASE DON'T CRY, OKAY?
IF YOU DO, RENA OR MINORUJI WILL TELL ME IMMEDIATELY.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE CRYING WHILE YOU WAIT FOR ME.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE CRYING WHILE YOU WAIT FOR ME.


RENA AND MINORUJI ARE MY FRIENDS. THEY TAKE CARE OF ME.
I KNOW.
BUT I WON'T CRY... I'LL MISS YOU, BUT I'LL BE OKAY.
LET'S SEAL THE PROMISE--
Ta-Tyump

--WITH A HUG.

OH, UH NOTHING.
WHAT'S WRONG?
ガッ
IT'S BEEN A WHILE!
MOM!
HI ERICA, WELCOME HOME! HI MINORU!
DON'T WORRY! SOPHIE SPEAKS JAPANESE!
HELLO!
I DON'T SPEAK FRENCH!
THIS IS RENA, SOPHIE, AND ROCKY.

IF SHE HAS PROBLEMS, I WANT TO BE THERE FOR HER.
RENA IS A VERY CLOSE FRIEND. SHE IS VERY KIND AND HAS BEEN THERE FOR ME.
ERICA, RENA'S NOT LIKE ANY OF THE OTHER GIRLS YOU'RE FRIENDS WITH.
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT HER.
WHY DIDN'T SHE GO BACK TO VISIT HER FAMILY?
HUH?
ERICA!
YOU'VE CHANGED! YOU'VE MATURED WHILE YOU WERE AWAY.
YOU THINK?

OMAKE 6.

I JUST GOT OVER THE SHOCK OF HEARING THAT KAMACHI DISBANDED. NOW, I'M DEPRESSED AGAIN BECAUSE DR. G DISBANDED, TOO!

SHOCK! TWO OF TOMO'S FRIENDS THOUGHT SANTARO'S NOSE WAS HIS MOUTH!

THAT MEANS THERE'S AT LEAST 100 PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY THAT THINK SO, TOO!

THEY SAY THAT HIS NOSE LOOKS LIKE A MOUTH.

IF YOU THOUGHT SO TOO, FESS UP!

I DON'T THINK SKANCHI OR PRI2 MADE THE SAME MISTAKE... BTW, THE LOVELY MANABU MIYAHARA IS NOW THE VOCALIST FOR A BAND CALLED BABY'S BREATH. ONCE I GET INTO AN ARTIST, I LIKE THEM FOR A LONG TIME, SO I HAVE A LOT OF MUSICIANS THAT I REALLY ENJOY. IT'S BECOMING HARD TO ATTEND ALL THEIR CONCERTS!!

THAT'S BECAUSE I HAVE FRIENDS LIKE RENA--

--THAT SUPPORT ME.

I'M A HUGE FAN OF THE MOVIE "ROCKY." THAT'S ALL.

WHY DO PEOPLE CALL YOU ROCKY?

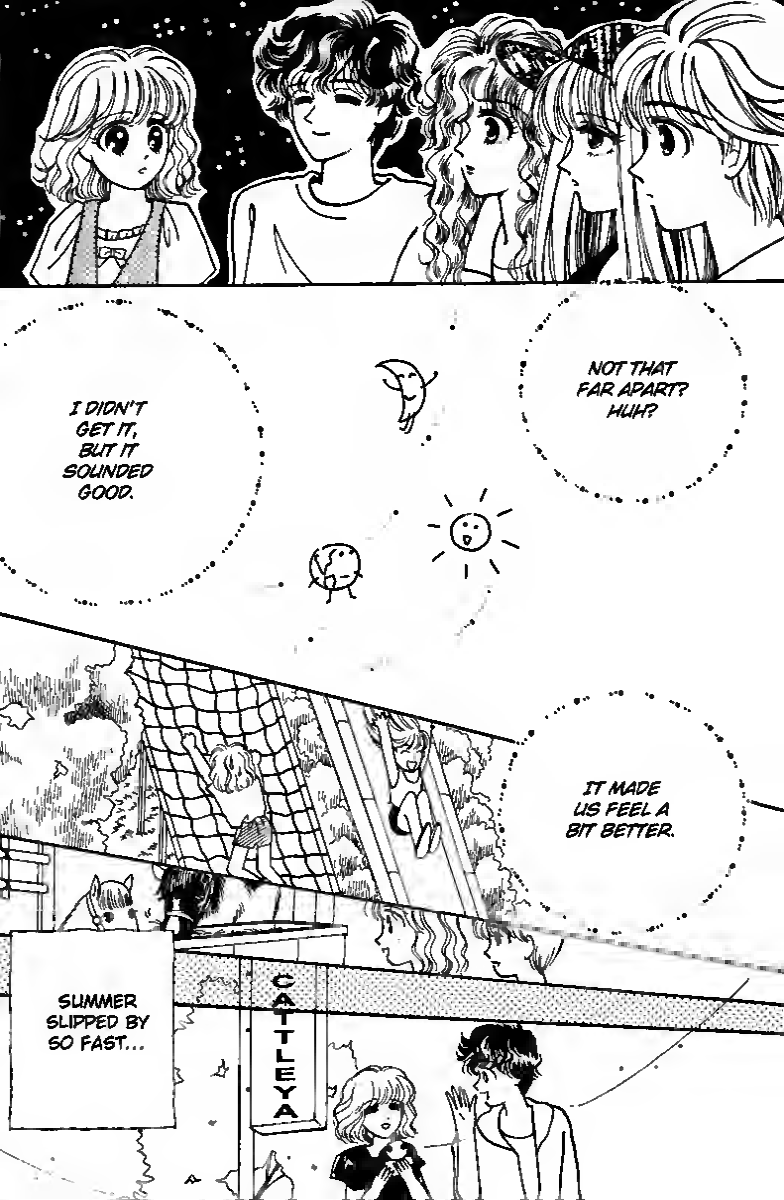
YES, I AM! MY LAST NAME IS KANEDA!

IS ROCKY JAPANESE?

MINORU...
CHEW CHEW
TAKE CARE OF ERICA FOR ME, PLEASE.
I'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF HER LONG BEFORE YOU SHOWED UP.
YES, I GUESS THAT YOU HAVE.

I WORRY ABOUT HER SHE'S A PARTY ANIMAL.
I DON'T THINK SHE WOULD LISTEN TO ME, MAN.
LOOK AFTER SOPHIE, TOO.
I WAS JUST THINKING...
WHY DON'T YOU OPEN A STUFFED ANIMAL BOUTIQUE?

ERICA, WE'LL STILL BE DRINKING TEA IN THE PARK WHEN WE'RE OLD, HUH?
I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT. I REALLY HAVEN'T GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT ABOUT MY FUTURE. I WOULD PROBABLY GET TOO ATTACHED TO THE ANIMALS, ANYWAY.
NEVERMIND
THAT WOULD SUCK!
MAYBE ERICA WILL BE IN THE U.S. WITH ROCKY BY THEN!
YOU WOULD PROBABLY BE IN FRANCE.
--BUT WE'LL STILL BE LOOKING AT THE SAME SUN AND MOON.
I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THIS CONVERSATION.
THAT MEANS WE ARE NOT AS FAR APART AS WE THINK.
WE MAY BE SPREAD OUT ON THIS PLANET--

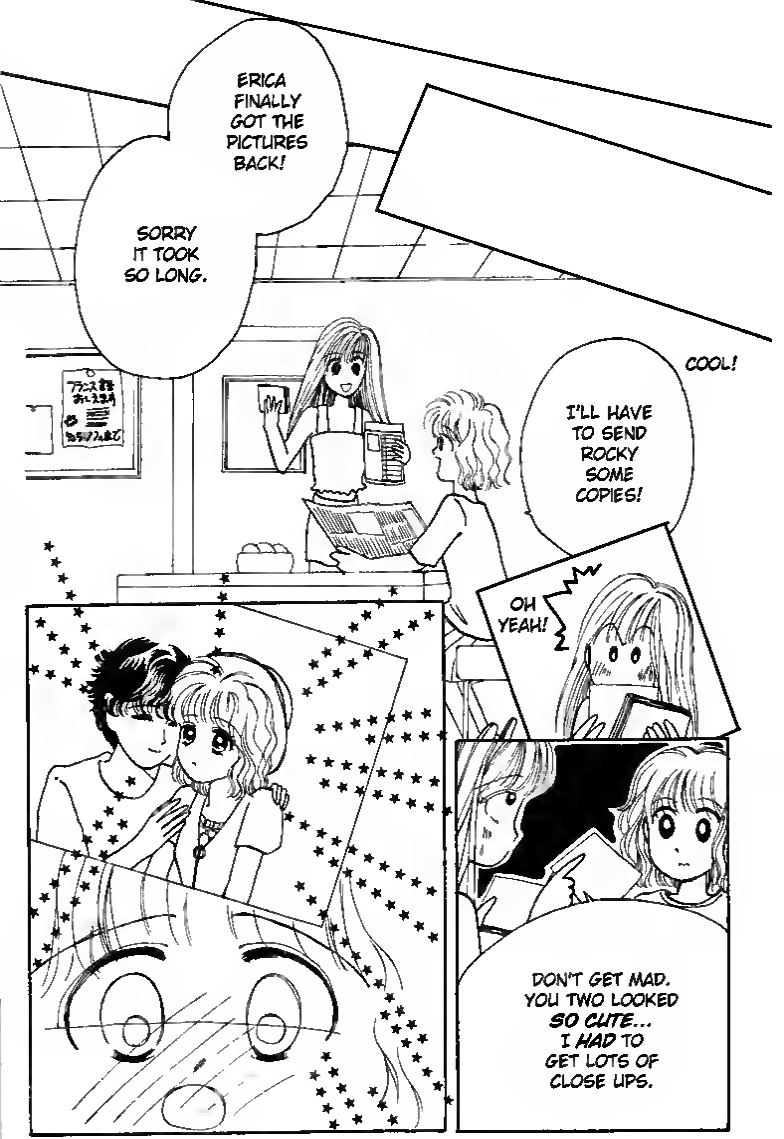

I DIDN'T GET IT, BUT IT SOUNDED GOOD.
NOT THAT FAR APART? HUH?
IT MADE US FEEL A BIT BETTER.
SUMMER SLIPPED BY SO FAST...
CATTLEYA

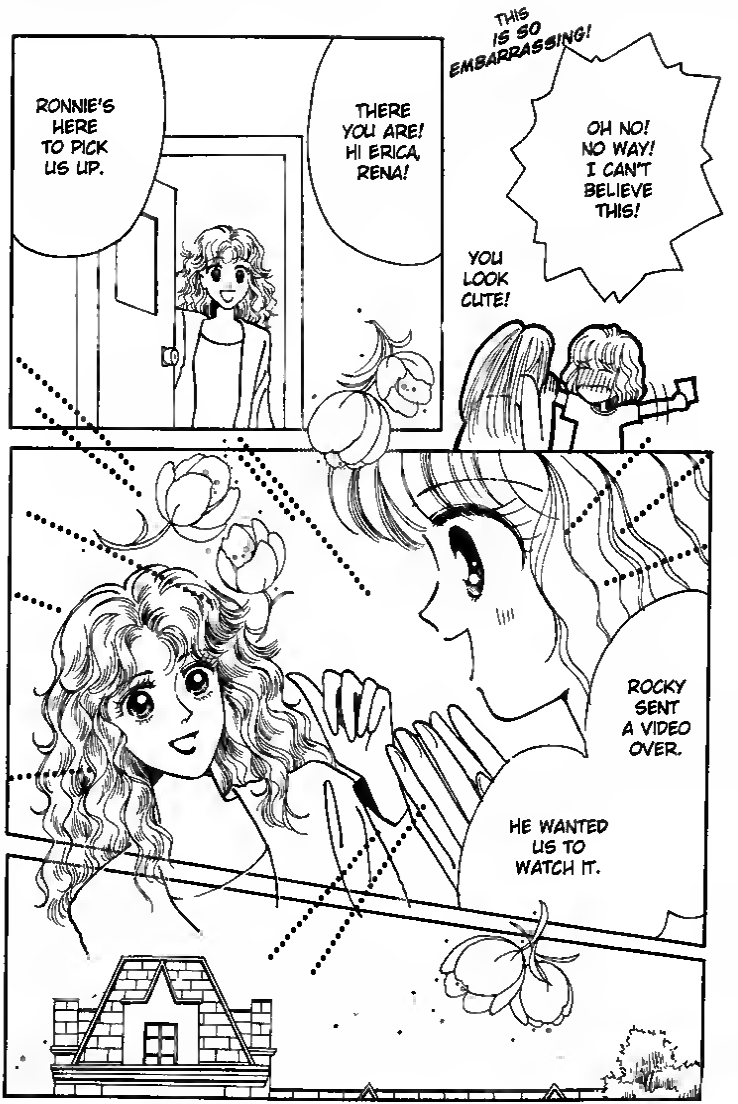
BEFORE LONG, ROCKY WAS READY TO LEAVE.
SANTARO WANTS TO COME WITH ME, TOO!
NO, I'M GOING TO THE AIRPORT WITH YOU!
MY FRIENDS WILL BE TAKING ME THERE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME.
<HEH HEH> WE'LL MAKE SURE SHE GETS BACK OKAY. LET HER GO WITH YOU.
I WON'T CRY! I CAN CONTROL MYSELF!
IF YOU GO, YOU'LL CRY, THEN I'LL CRY --
-- AND I'LL MISS MY PLANE!

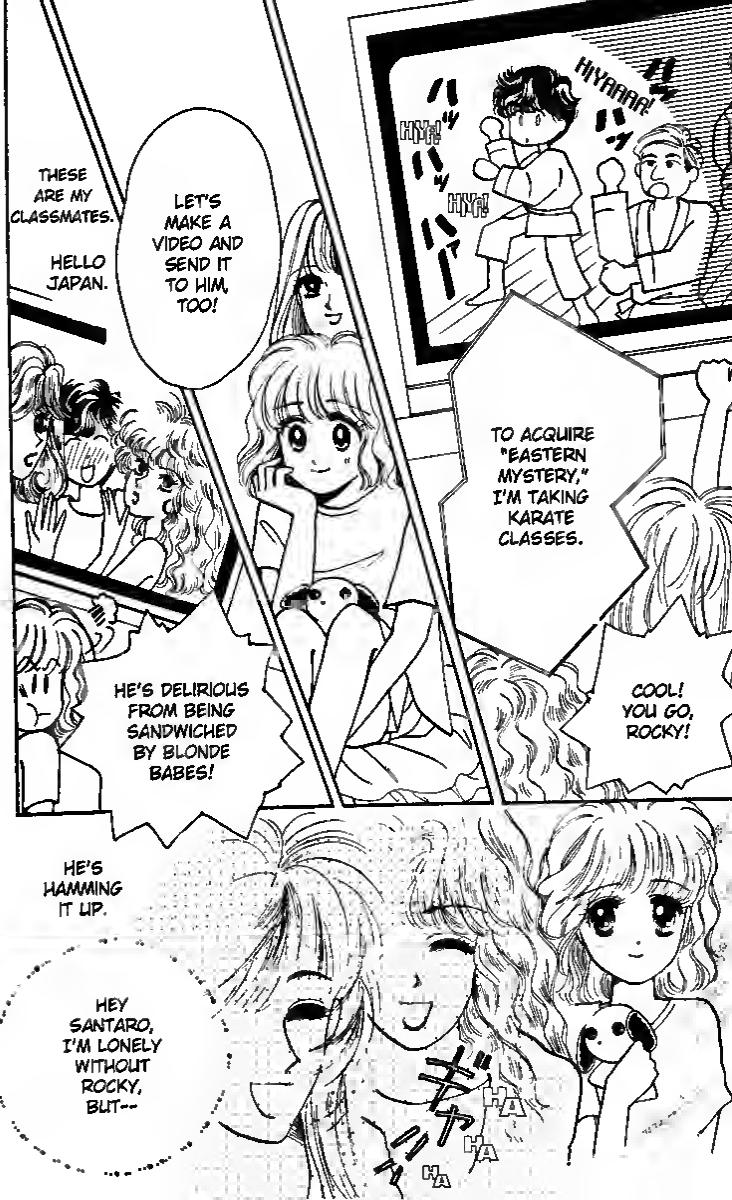
ALL RIGHT.
GOOD LUCK!
DON'T FORGET ABOUT US LITTLE PEOPLE WHEN YOU GET FAMOUS!
THANKS, GUYS!
I GOTTA CATCH MY PLANE.
TAKE CARE OF ERICA FOR ME, ALL RIGHT?
DON'T WORRY, BRO!
HE'S REALLY LEAVING

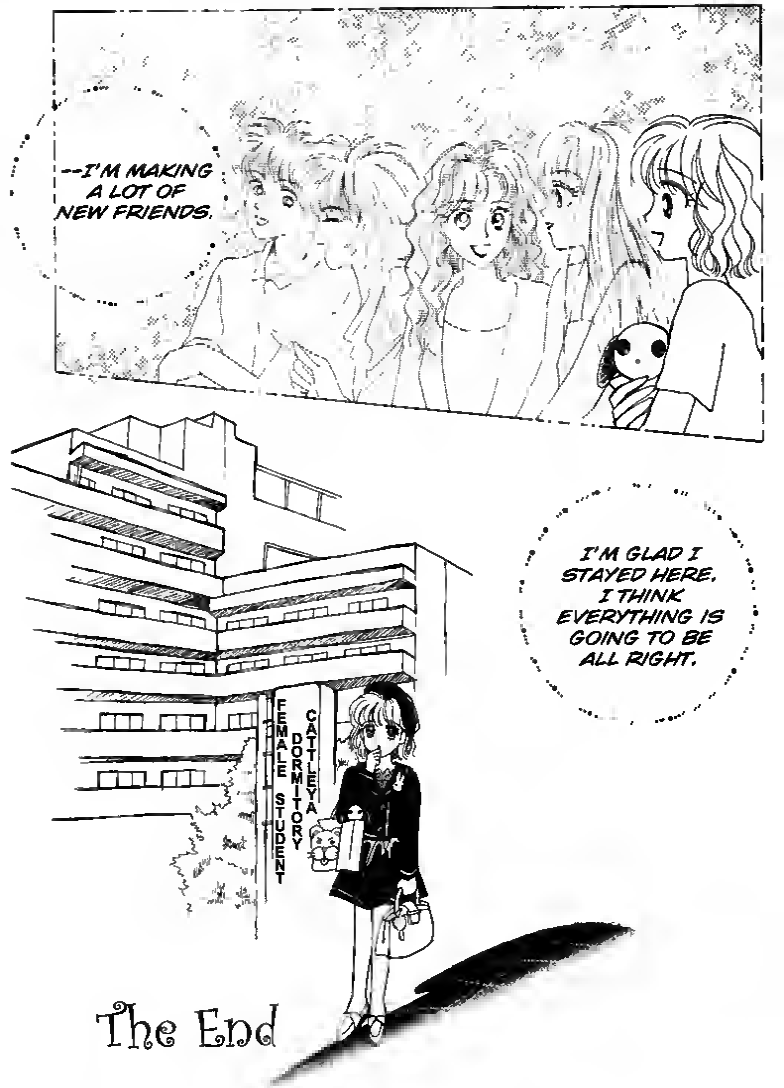
SHOOT!
ひぃ…ひぃ…
BREATHE
S...
Sob!
スゥ
JUST TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
YEAH! ROCKY, GO KICK SOME BUTT, MAN!
ALL RIGHT! SHOUTOUTS FOR ROCKY!
GOOD LUCK! GO GET 'EM, DUDE!
STOP! THIS IS EMBARRASSING!

I PROMISED. I MISS HIM ALREADY--
--I SAID I WOULDN'T CRY!

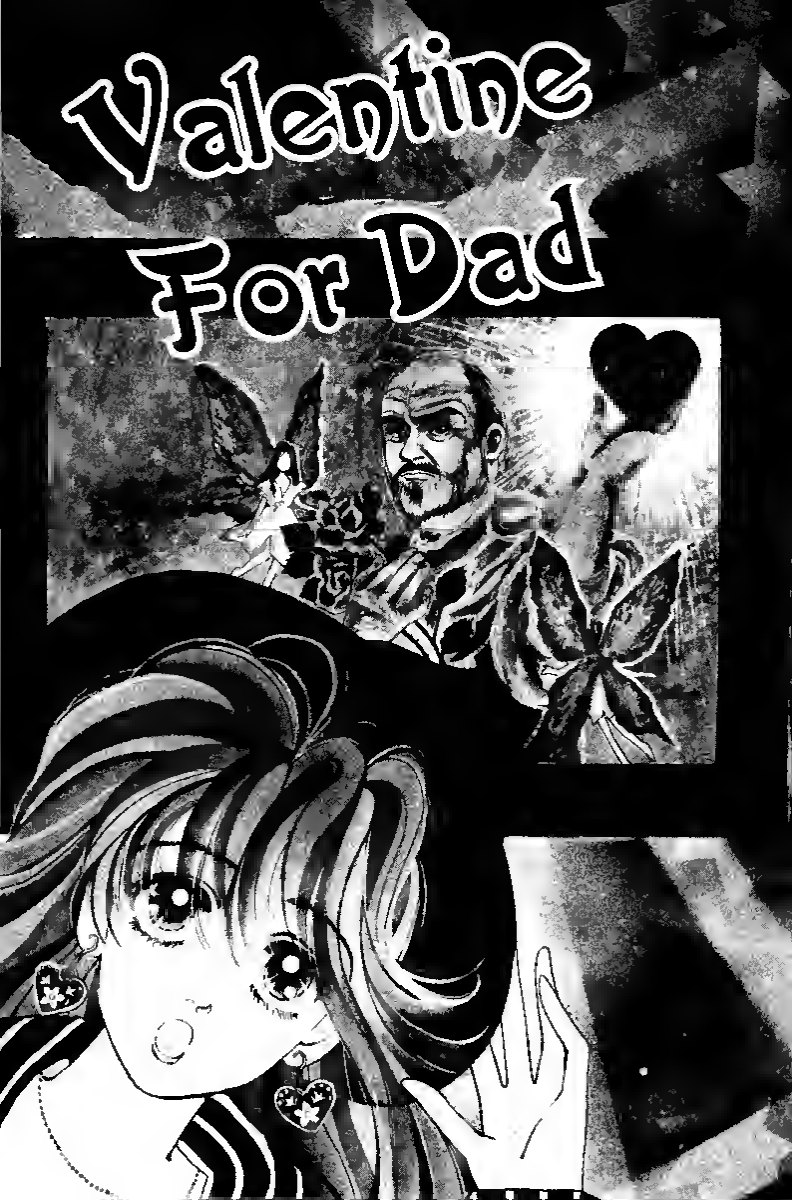

ERICA FINALLY GOT THE PICTURES BACK!
SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG.
COOL!
I'LL HAVE TO SEND ROCKY SOME COPIES!
OH YEAH!
DON'T GET MAD. YOU TWO LOOKED SO CUTE... I HAD TO GET LOTS OF CLOSE UPS.


RONNIE'S HERE TO PICK US UP.
THERE YOU ARE! HI ERICA, RENA!
THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING!
OH NO! NO WAY! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
YOU LOOK CUTE!
ROCKY SENT A VIDEO OVER.
HE WANTED US TO WATCH IT.

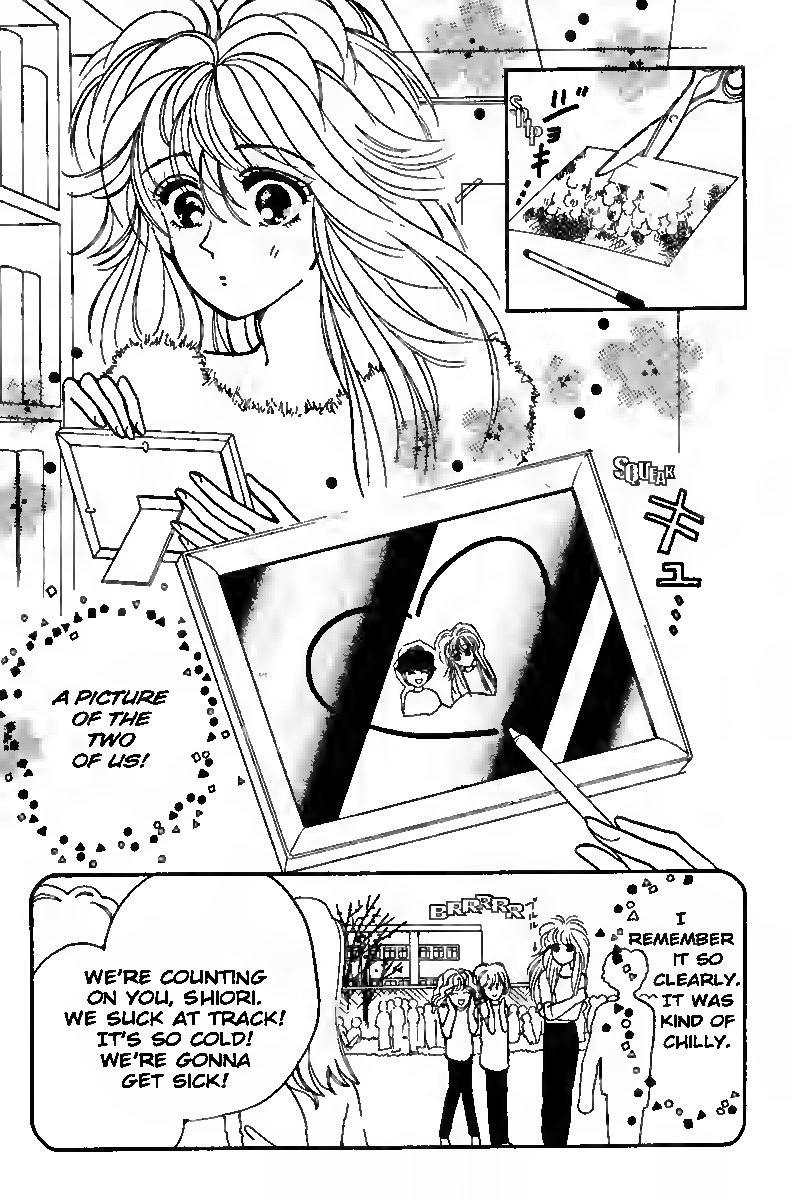

HIYAAAA!
HIYA!
HIYA!
TO ACQUIRE "EASTERN MYSTERY," I'M TAKING KARATE CLASSES.
COOL! YOU GO, ROCKY!
LET'S MAKE A VIDEO AND SEND IT TO HIM, TOO!
THESE ARE MY CLASSMATES.
HELLO JAPAN.
HE'S DELIRIOUS FROM BEING SANDWICHED BY BLONDE BABES!
HE'S HAMMING IT UP.
HEY SANTARO, I'M LONELY WITHOUT ROCKY, BUT--
HA
HA
HA

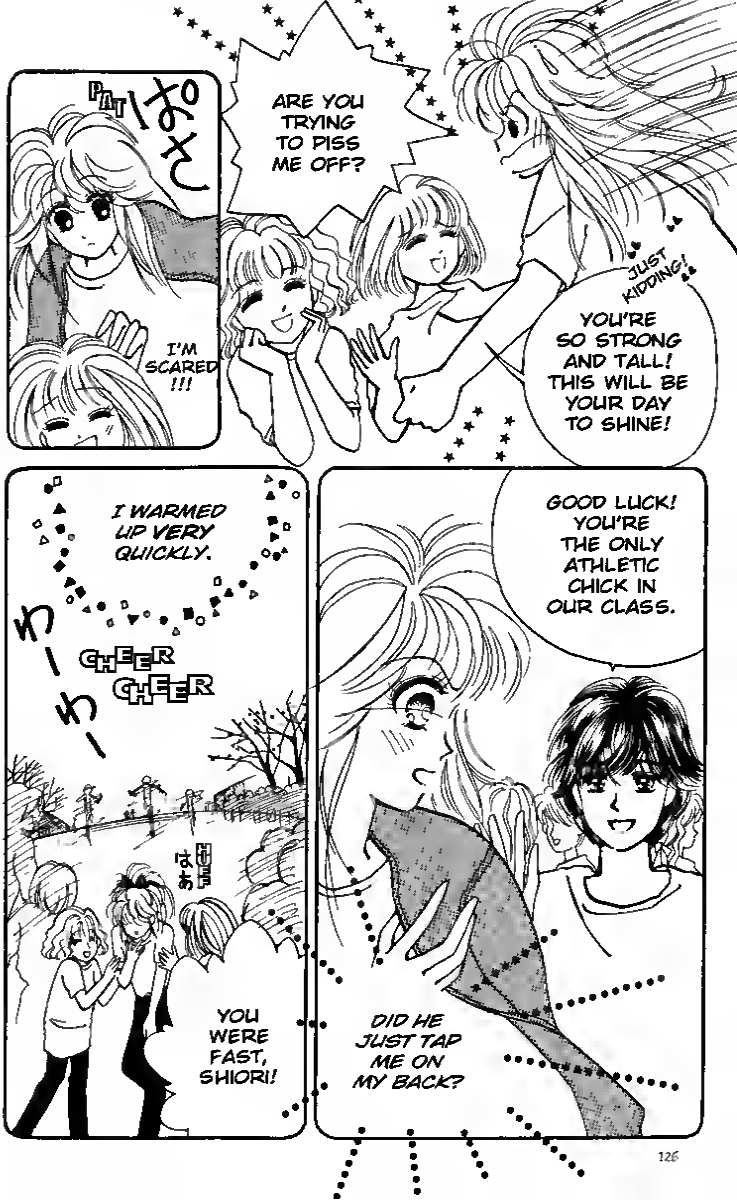

--I'M MAKING A LOT OF NEW FRIENDS.
I'M GLAD I STAYED HERE. I THINK EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
CATTLEYA DORMITORY FEMALE STUDENT
The End

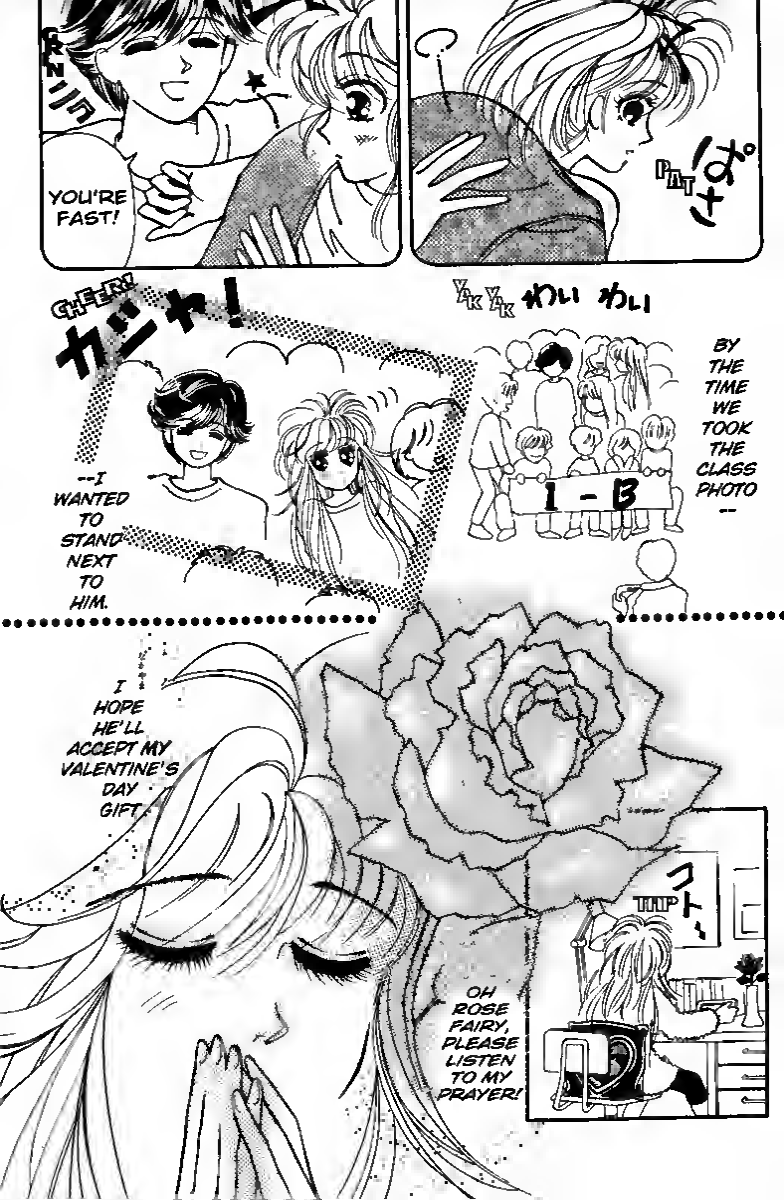
Valentine For Dad

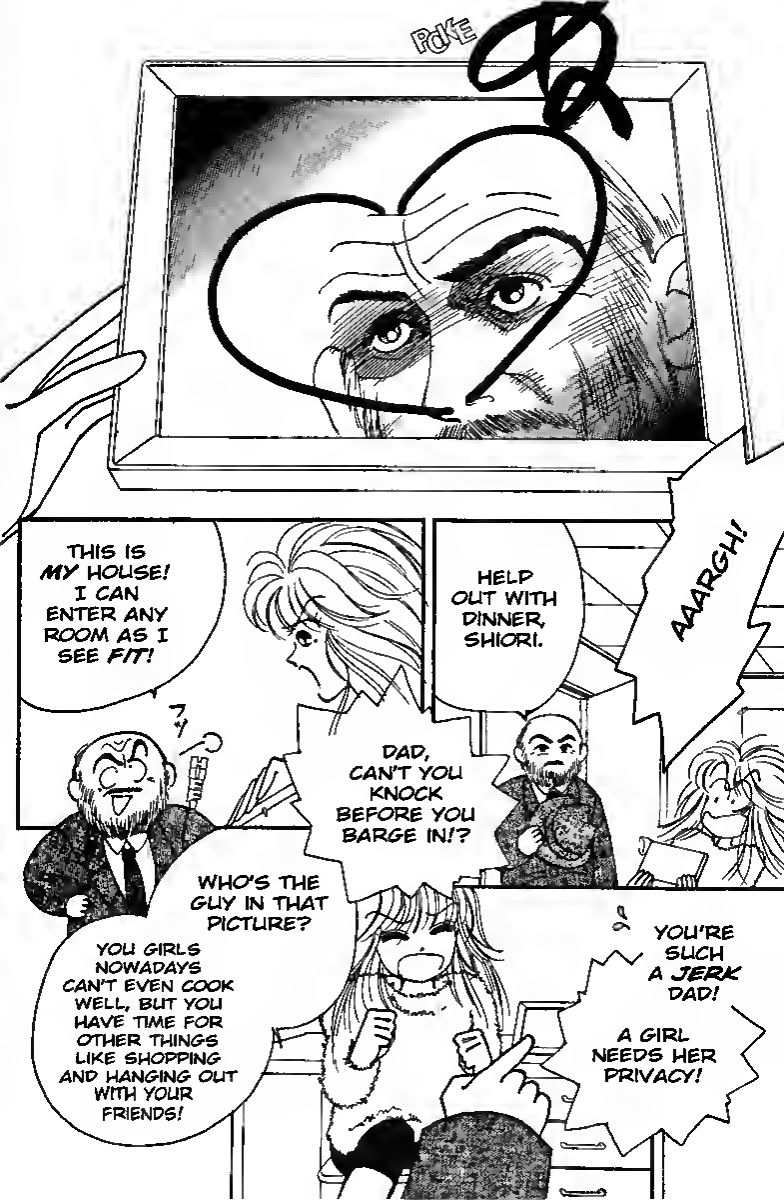


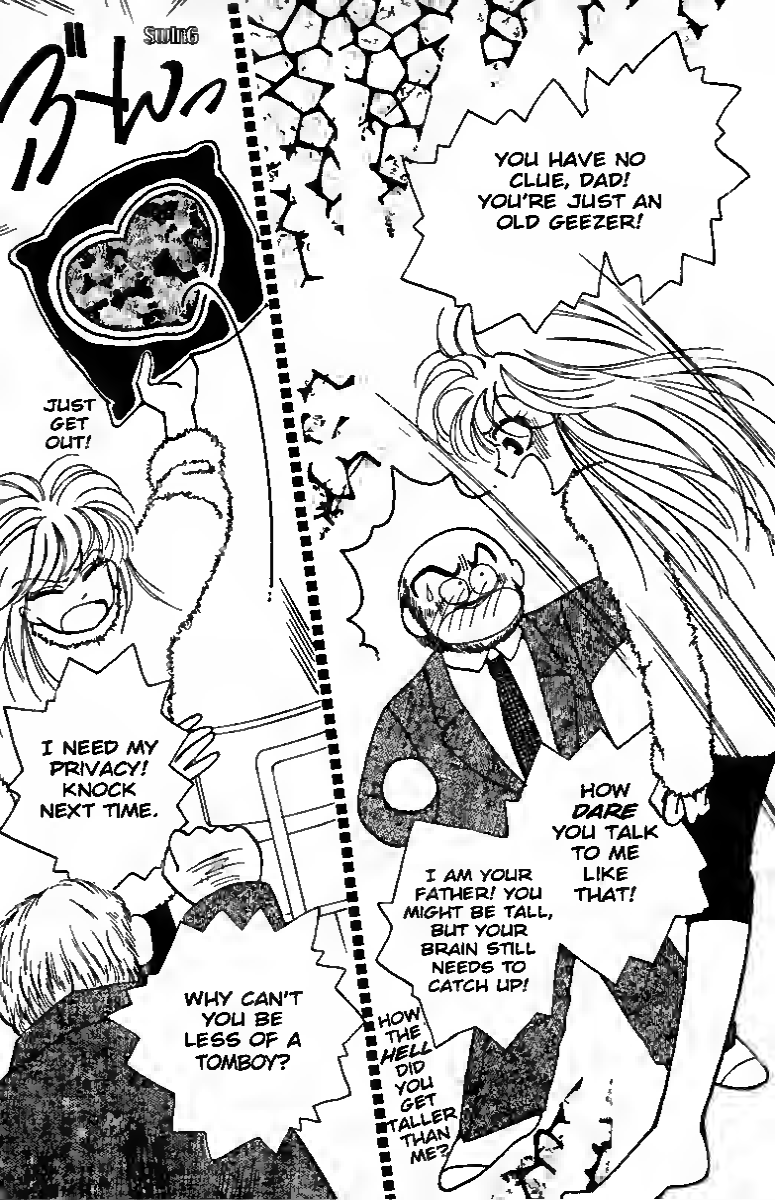
UGH!


シュッ
SQUEAK
キュッ
A PICTURE OF THE TWO OF US!
BRRRRRR
I REMEMBER IT SO CLEARLY. IT WAS KIND OF CHILLY.
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU, SHIORI. WE SUCK AT TRACK! IT'S SO COLD! WE'RE GONNA GET SICK!


PAT
はさ
I'M SCARED !!!
ARE YOU TRYING TO PISS ME OFF?
JUST KIDDING!
YOU'RE SO STRONG AND TALL! THIS WILL BE YOUR DAY TO SHINE!
GOOD LUCK! YOU'RE THE ONLY ATHLETIC CHICK IN OUR CLASS.
DID HE JUST TAP ME ON MY BACK?
I WARMED UP VERY QUICKLY.
わーわー
CHEER CHEER
はあはあ
YOU WERE FAST, SHIORI!


YOU'RE FAST!
PAT ぽん
CHEERS! カシャ!
--I WANTED TO STAND NEXT TO HIM.
YAK YAK わいわい
1-B
BY THE TIME WE TOOK THE CLASS PHOTO --
I HOPE HE'LL ACCEPT MY VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT.
TAP コト、
OH ROSE FAIRY, PLEASE LISTEN TO MY PRAYER!


POKE
THIS IS MY HOUSE! I CAN ENTER ANY ROOM AS I SEE FIT!
HELP OUT WITH DINNER, SHIORI.
AAARGH!
DAD, CAN'T YOU KNOCK BEFORE YOU BARGE IN!?
WHO'S THE GUY IN THAT PICTURE?
YOU GIRLS NOWADAYS CAN'T EVEN COOK WELL, BUT YOU HAVE TIME FOR OTHER THINGS LIKE SHOPPING AND HANGING OUT WITH YOUR FRIENDS!
YOU'RE SUCH A JERK DAD!
A GIRL NEEDS HER PRIVACY!


ぶんっ
JUST GET OUT!
I NEED MY PRIVACY! KNOCK NEXT TIME.
WHY CAN'T YOU BE LESS OF A TOMBOY?
HOW THE HELL DID YOU GET TALLER THAN ME?
I AM YOUR FATHER! YOU MIGHT BE TALL, BUT YOUR BRAIN STILL NEEDS TO CATCH UP!
HOW DARE YOU TALK TO ME LIKE THAT!
YOU HAVE NO CLUE, DAD! YOU'RE JUST AN OLD GEEZER!

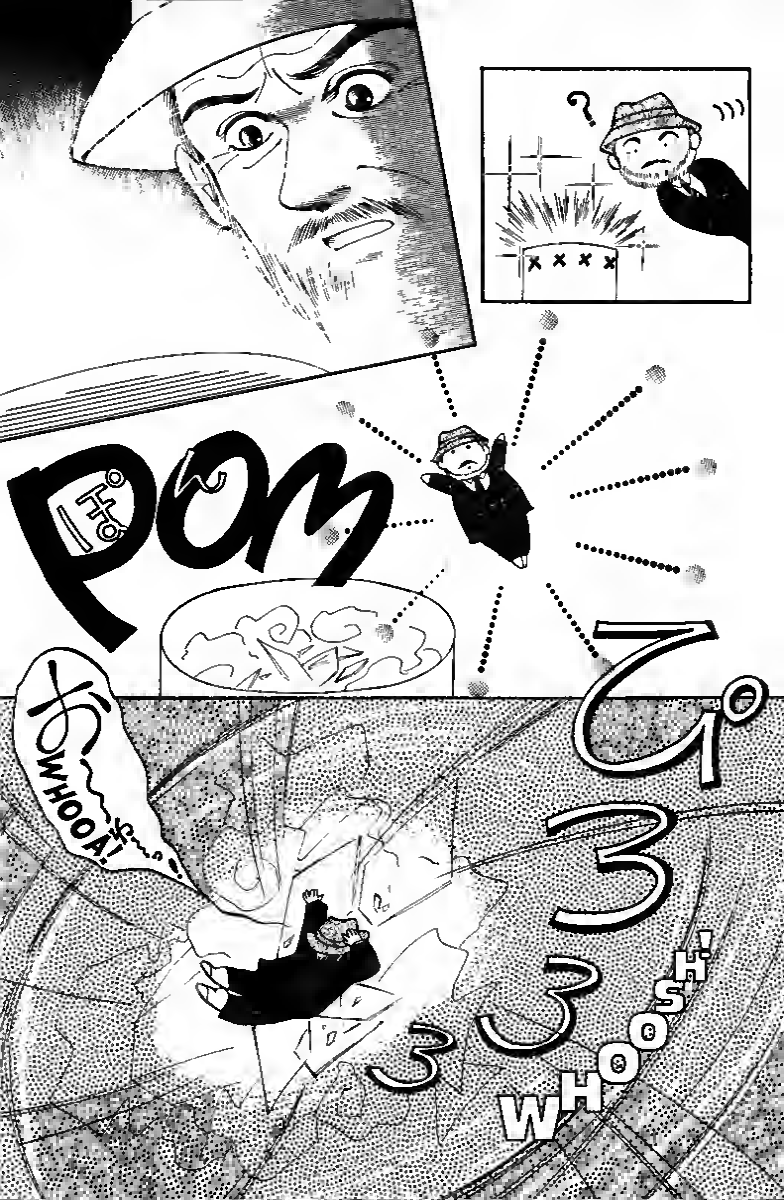
ガシャーン
CRASH
ばこ
THUD
ピッ!!

YOU IDIOT! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!
ガッシャーン
SMASH
バターン
BEAM
YOU WERE SWINGING THE PILLOW.

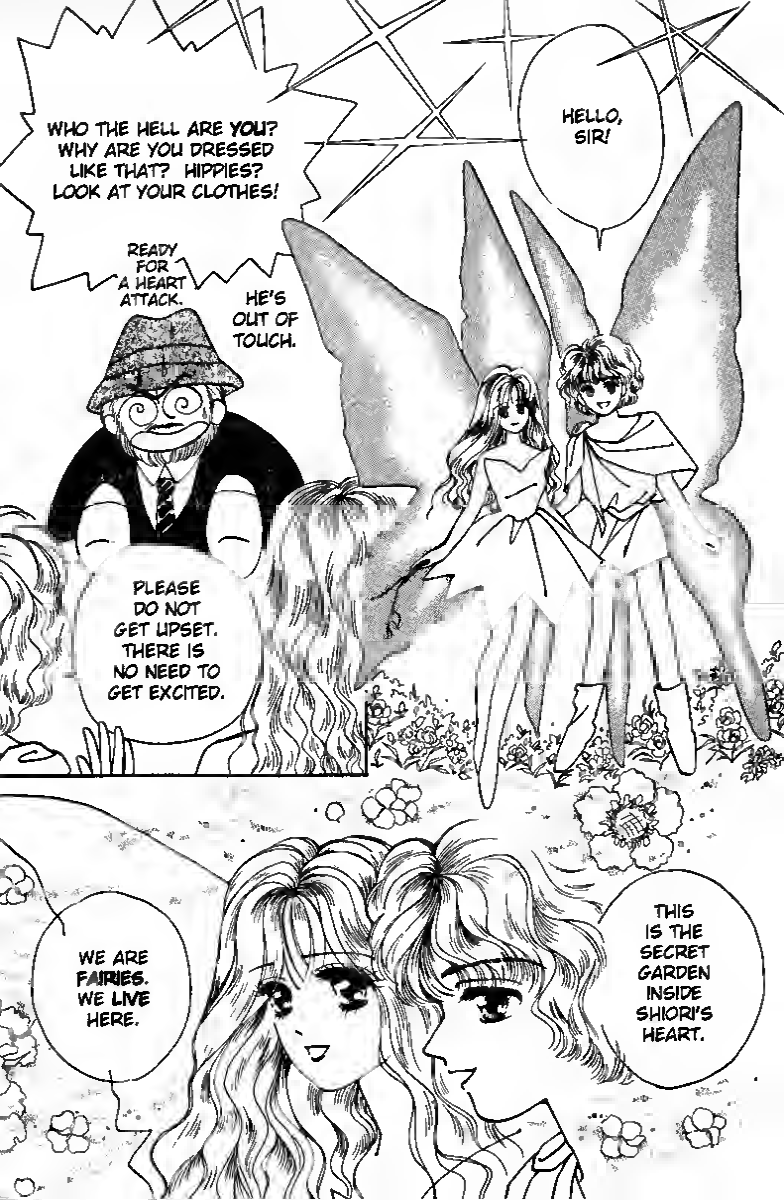
IT WAS JUST A CUT-OUT OF A CLASS PICTURE--
--BUT NOW IT'S COMPLETELY BROKEN.
UM, EXCUSE ME... COULD I PAY FOR THIS?
LOOK, ISN'T IT CUTE?
SQUEAL SQUEAL
キャッピ キャッピ
お会計
I DON'T HAVE A BOYFRIEND, SO I COULDN'T USE IT.

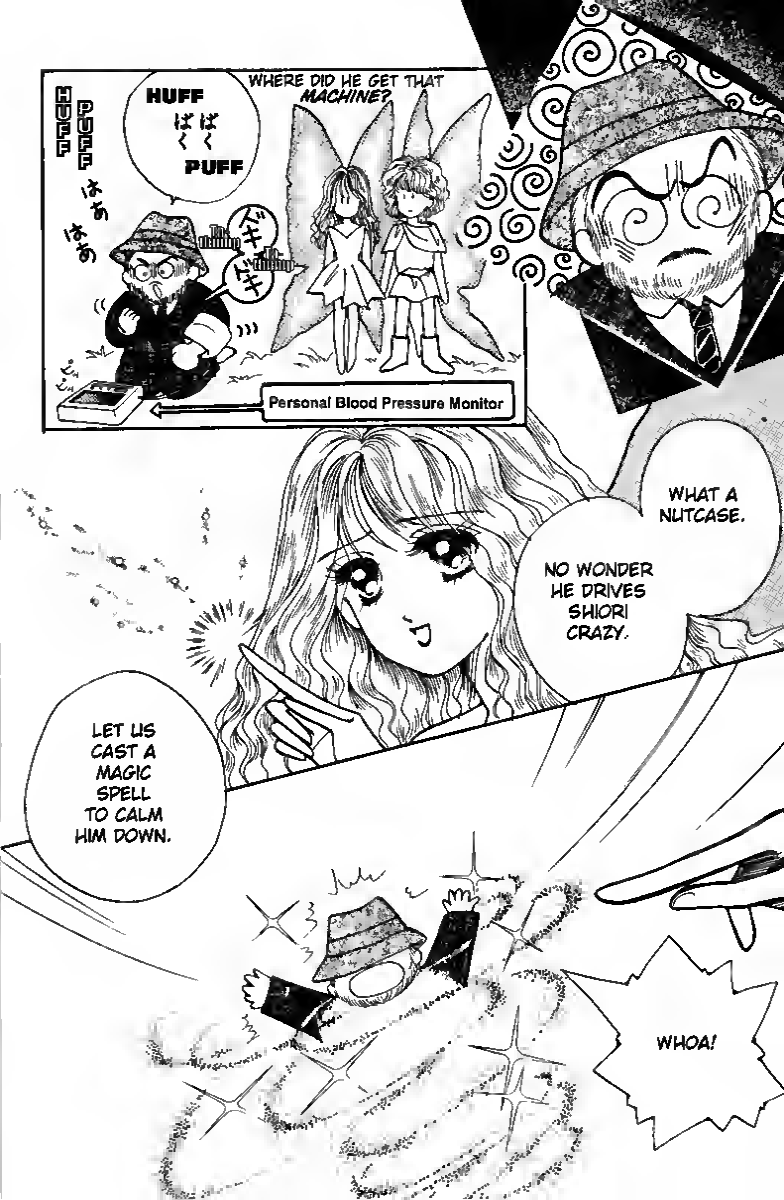
THAT BALD GUY'S GONNA BUY THAT FRAME!
WHAT A WEIRDO!
I'LL TAKE THIS ONE.
SO, THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE "CUTE."
I'LL WRAP IT FOR YOU.
IT'S FOR MY DAUGHTER!!
GRUMPY DAD
IF I GO HOME NOW--
--THAT MEANS I'LL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH DAD LONGER.
HI, SHIORI!
I'LL GO HOME LATER.

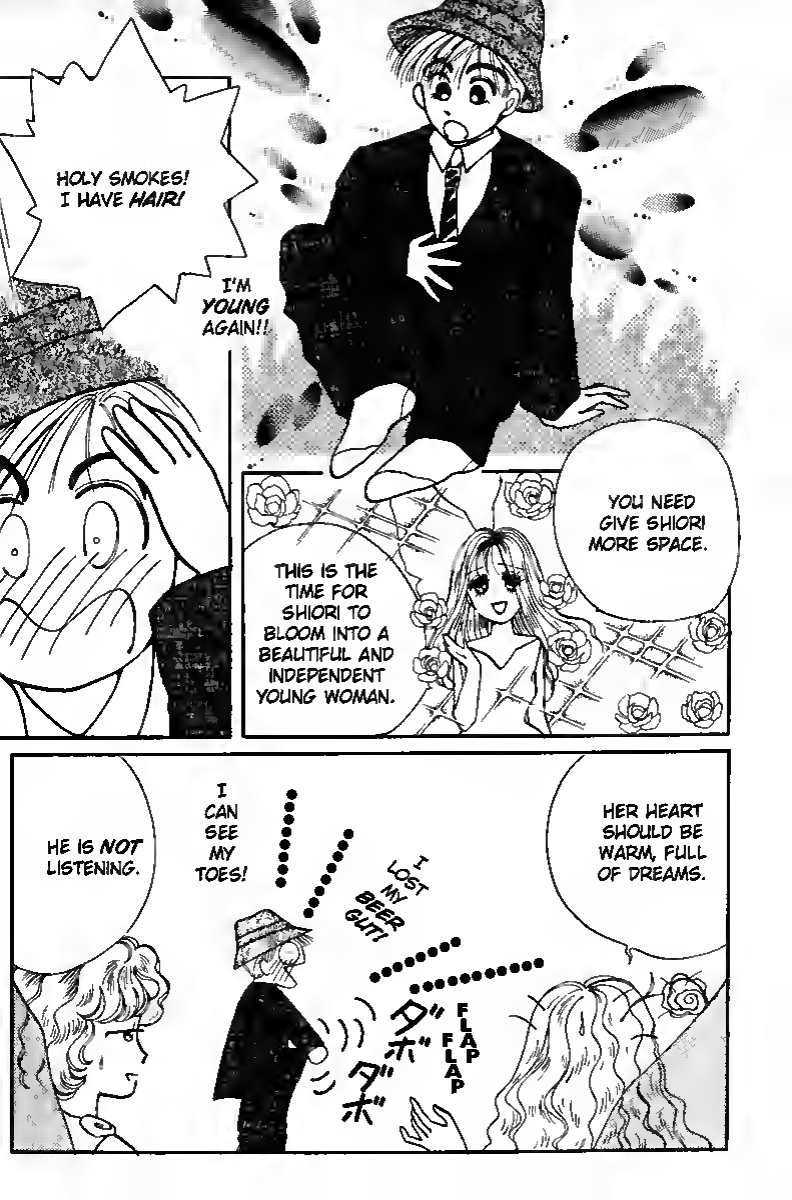
WE'RE GOING TO AN ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT PIZZA PLACE. WANNA JOIN US? C'MON, IT'S FRIDAY!
I'M ON A DIET, ANYWAY.
I DON'T EAT THAT MUCH, SO I STAY AWAY FORM THOSE PLACES.
YOU PROBABLY HAVE A BIG APPETITE.
HA!
SPARKLE
WHATEVER. I'LL EAT ENOUGH FOR THE ALL OF US.


?
POW
WHOOA!
WHOOSH!

つんつん
TAP TAP
うりうり
POKE
ゴロ
ROLL
ガバチョ
LEAP!
HOW DARE YOU POKE ME WITH YOUR DIRTY FEET! THAT'S RUDE!


WHO THE HELL ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT? HIPPIES? LOOK AT YOUR CLOTHES!
HELLO, SIR!
READY FOR A HEART ATTACK.
HE'S OUT OF TOUCH.
PLEASE DO NOT GET UPSET. THERE IS NO NEED TO GET EXCITED.
WE ARE FAIRIES. WE LIVE HERE.
THIS IS THE SECRET GARDEN INSIDE SHIORI'S HEART.


WHERE DID HE GET THAT MACHINE?
HUFF
ばく
ばく
PUFF
はあ
はあ
HUFF PUFF
ピキーン
ピキーン
Personal Blood Pressure Monitor
WHAT A NUTCASE.
NO WONDER HE DRIVES SHIORI CRAZY.
LET US CAST A MAGIC SPELL TO CALM HIM DOWN.
WHOA!


HOLY SMOKES! I HAVE HAIR!
I'M YOUNG AGAIN!!
YOU NEED GIVE SHIORI MORE SPACE.
THIS IS THE TIME FOR SHIORI TO BLOOM INTO A BEAUTIFUL AND INDEPENDENT YOUNG WOMAN.
HE IS NOT LISTENING.
I CAN SEE MY TOES!
I LOST MY BEER GUT!
ダボ ダボ
FLAP FLAP
HER HEART SHOULD BE WARM, FULL OF DREAMS.

NOW LOOK--
-- SEE HOW THE FLOWERS ARE WITHERING OVER THERE?
HERE, THE DESIRE TO RETURN TO YOUR YOUTH CAN BE GRANTED.
WE ARE TRYING TO EXPLAIN, BUT YOU ARE BEING VERY RUDE.
?
THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS YOU ARE HAVING WITH SHIORI.
IF ALL THE FLOWERS DIE THIS PLACE, HER HEART, WILL BECOME BARREN AND LONELY! WE WILL HAVE NO PLACE TO GO!

WHAT'S YOUR TYPE, NAKAYAMA? I THINK YOU WOULD BE INTO THE PETITE, GIRLY GIRLS.
THIS YEAR? IT'S NOT LIKE I GOT A LOT LAST YEAR.
THIS YEAR, I'M SURE YOU'LL GET LOTS OF VALENTINE GIFTS.
I KNEW IT!
WELL, IN THEORY...
YOU DON'T ALWAYS FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE THAT'S YOUR "TYPE."
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

JUST BECAUSE SHIORI'S A TALL TOMBOY DOESN'T MEAN SHE IS BAD.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE NICE.
A GLIMMER OF HOPE!
HEE HEE!
I'M JUST JOKING!
YOU LITTLE BRAT!
CHILL OUT, SHIORI.
HELP ME!
OOOPS!
SIGH
I'M DIGGING MY OWN GRAVE.
PIZZA HOUSE
I'M STUFFED!
BYE! GOOD NIGHT!

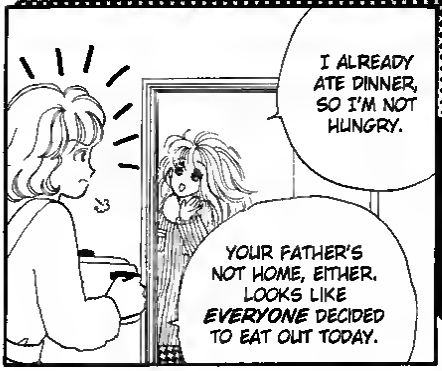
I'M GOING THAT WAY, TOO.
HI GIRLS! I'LL SEE YOU IN "LET'S STAY TOGETHER FOREVER." CIAO. PLEASE READ "AQUARIUM" TOO!
Tic Thump
WHAT A FLIRT!
UH...
YOU BROKE THROUGH THIS GLASS. YOU CAN SEE THE OTHER WORLD FROM HERE.
WHAT IS THIS?

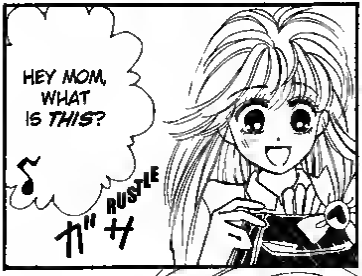
NO WAY!
MOST OF THEM ARE FROM YOUNGER GIRLS, THOUGH.
THE CITY IS *FILLED* WITH HEART-SHAPED THINGS.
I'M SURE THAT GUYS WILL BE *THRILLED* TO GET A GIFT FROM YOU.
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME. I GET A LOT OF CHOCOLATES.

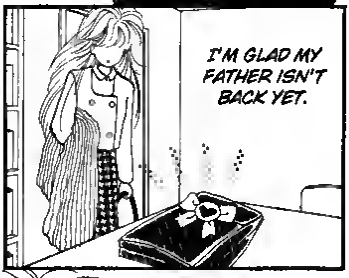
THAT PUNK!
SLA
GO HOME RIGHT NOW, SHIORI!
OH BOY...
I KNOW WHAT HE'S AFTER!
GET AWAY FROM SHIORI!

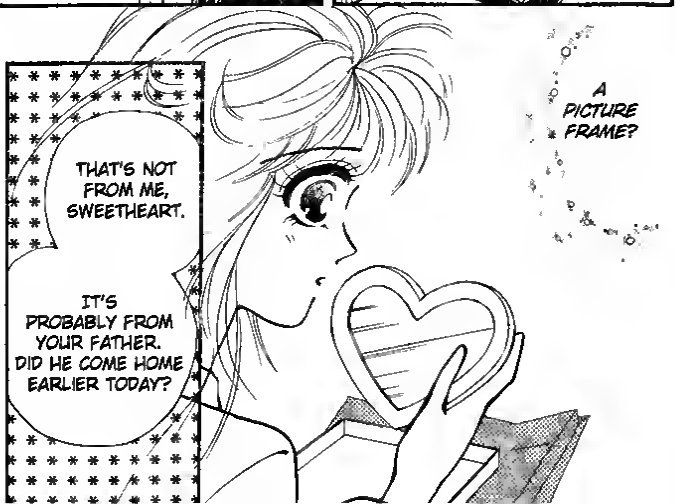
MY DAUGHTER IS IN DANGER!
I AM SORRY, BUT WE CANNOT DO THAT YET. YOU HAVE TO STAY UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR DAUGHTER. OTHERWISE, YOU AND HER WILL NEVER GET ALONG, AND SHE WILL BECOME EXTREMELY REBELLIOUS. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?
LET ME OUT OF HERE!
WELL, UH...
WHAT IS HE *PTER"?
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT SHE IS IN DANGER?
I KNOW HOW THEY THINK! GUYS ARE JUST AFTER ONE THING!
BAD POSE
LISTEN, I WAS ONCE YOUNG TOO!

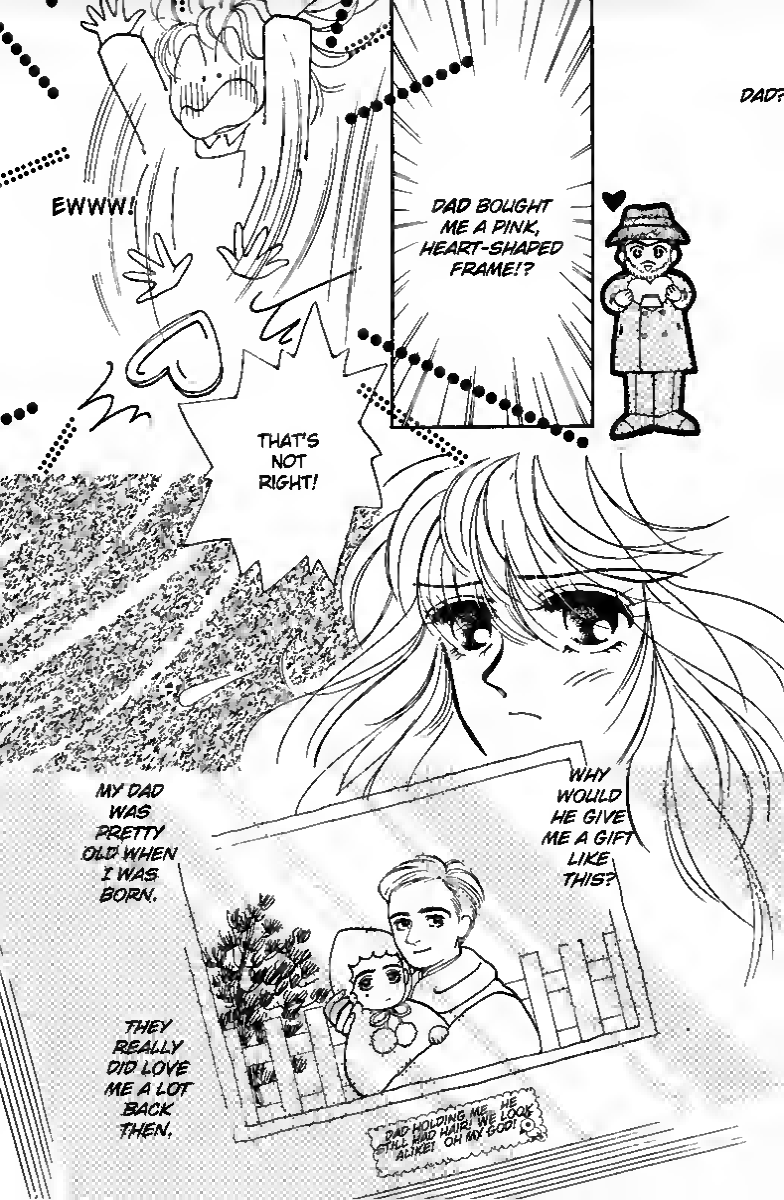
SEXY PANTS, SUGAR!
HEY BABY!
THANKS!
I ONLY HAD ONE THING ON MY MIND--
--WHEN I WAS SHIORI'S AGE...
SO, YOUR MIND WAS IN THE GUTTER, TOO?
OH MY!
OF COURSE!
AAARGH!
THANKS FOR WALKING ME BACK HOME.
GOOD NIGHT!


I'M HOME!
YOU'RE LATE!
I ALREADY ATE DINNER, SO I'M NOT HUNGRY.
YOUR FATHER'S NOT HOME, EITHER. LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE DECIDED TO EAT OUT TODAY.


HEY MOM, WHAT IS THIS?
RUSTLE


I'M GLAD MY FATHER ISN'T BACK YET.


A PICTURE FRAME?
THAT'S NOT FROM ME, SWEETHEART.
IT'S PROBABLY FROM YOUR FATHER. DID HE COME HOME EARLIER TODAY?


DAD?
EWWW!
DAD BOUGHT ME A PINK, HEART-SHAPED FRAME!?
THAT'S NOT RIGHT!
MY DAD WAS PRETTY OLD WHEN I WAS BORN.
WHY WOULD HE GIVE ME A GIFT LIKE THIS?
THEY REALLY DID LOVE ME A LOT BACK THEN.
DAD HOLDING ME. HE STILL HAD HAIR! WE LOOK ALIKE! OH MY GOD!

THAT NIGHT--
--DAD DID NOT COME HOME.
Chemistry Lab
SHIORI, DO YOU WANT TO GRAB A BITE WITH ME AFTER SCHOOL?
WHY IS HE ASKING ME OUT?

WOW, YOU'RE CLOSE TO YOUR MOM.
ARE YOU CLOSE TO YOUR FAMILY?
I ATE OUT YESTERDAY, AND MY MOM ALWAYS FIXES ME LUNCH ON SATURDAY, SO...
MY DAD'S SUCH A NOSY PRICK! I HATE HIM!
JUST MY MOM, REALLY. NOT MY DAD AT ALL!
IT'S BECAUSE HE CARES ABOUT YOU, THAT'S ALL.
IT'S THAT PUNK FROM YESTERDAY!
SNEEZE!
SOMEONE WAS TALKING ABOUT ME!

HE WON'T SAY YES.
WANNA COME OVER FOR LUNCH?
HE CAN'T HELP BEING NOSY. HE IS JUST LOOKING OUT FOR YOU.
HMMMM. GUESS THE KID'S NOT A COMPLETE IDIOT. STILL A SMARTASS, THOUGH.
I NEED TO GO HOME!
WOW! I'D LOVE TO!
WE CANNOT LET YOU DO THAT!
HEY, PLEASE DO NOT CHOKE MY FRIEND!
OH SHOOT!

OH MY GOD! HE'S COMING OVER!
I HOPE DAD'S NOT HOME. IF HE IS, I HOPE HE'S SLEEPING, AT LEAST.
HI, NICE TO MEET YOU!
I'M SO HAPPY!
WHAT? HE HASN'T COME HOME YET?
HE'S STILL NOT HOME YET.
WHERE'S DAD?

DAD'S NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE!
HE HASN'T CALLED, EITHER.
I HOPE HE'S JUST DRUNK AND PASSED OUT SOMEWHERE.
HA! DOES HE DO THAT OFTEN?
I CAN'T BELIEVE DAD! WHAT A PUTZ!
AAAGH!
OH WELL. I MADE CHICKEN FOR DINNER.
COOL!

I'VE CALLED EVERYWHERE, BUT HE'S NOT AT ANY OF HIS USUAL PLACES.
NO WORD YET FROM DAD...
IT'S GETTING LATE!
WHERE IS HE?
WHY ISN'T HE COMING BACK HOME?
WHY?

I'LL GO CHECK OUT THE BARS.
WHY, MORE IMPORTANTLY --
-- AM I SO UPSET?
I CAN'T SIT STILL!
SHIORI?
IT'S A GUY THING. MY DAD HANGS OUT IN THOSE PLACES, TOO.
WHAT? MATCHES FROM STRIP CLUBS? WHAT A JERK!

I'LL GO WITH YOU.
IT'S NOT SAFE, AND YOU DON'T WANT TO BE OUT ALONE.
NO SHIORI! DON'T GO THERE!
THANKS.
KARAOKE
GENTLEMAN'S CLUB
SEBASTIAN
NO IDEA.
IS SHE A DRAG QUEEN?
ROSE
ANGELS
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM TODAY.

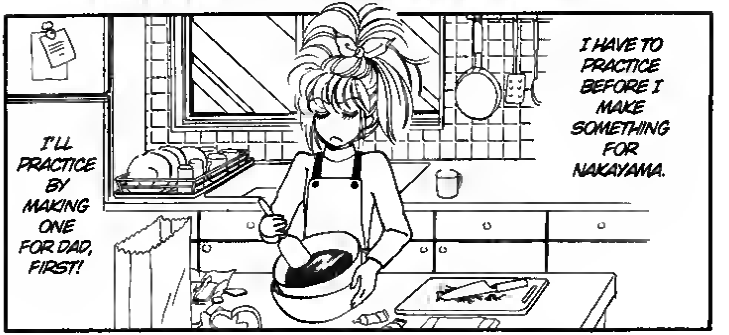
OKAY I'LL STOP WITH THE B.S.
I'M JUST TRYING TO GET YOUR ATTENTION BEFORE VALENTINE'S DAY.
THANKS FOR HELPING ME.
WHERE CAN HE BE?
IT'S GETTING REALLY LATE. LET'S GO HOME.
WHY?
IT'S NO PROBLEM. I'M SURE HE IS OKAY.
YOU'RE RIGHT.

I WANT TO BE YOUR VALENTINE.
WHY?
?
COME ON, EVERYONE THINKS OF ME AS ONE OF THE GUYS. I'M ROUGH AND CRUDE!
THEY JUST LIKE TO TEASE YOU BECAUSE YOU REACT SO STRONGLY. THEY LIKE TO TEASE EVERYBODY, INCLUDING ME.
HE THINKS OF ME AS A GIRL!

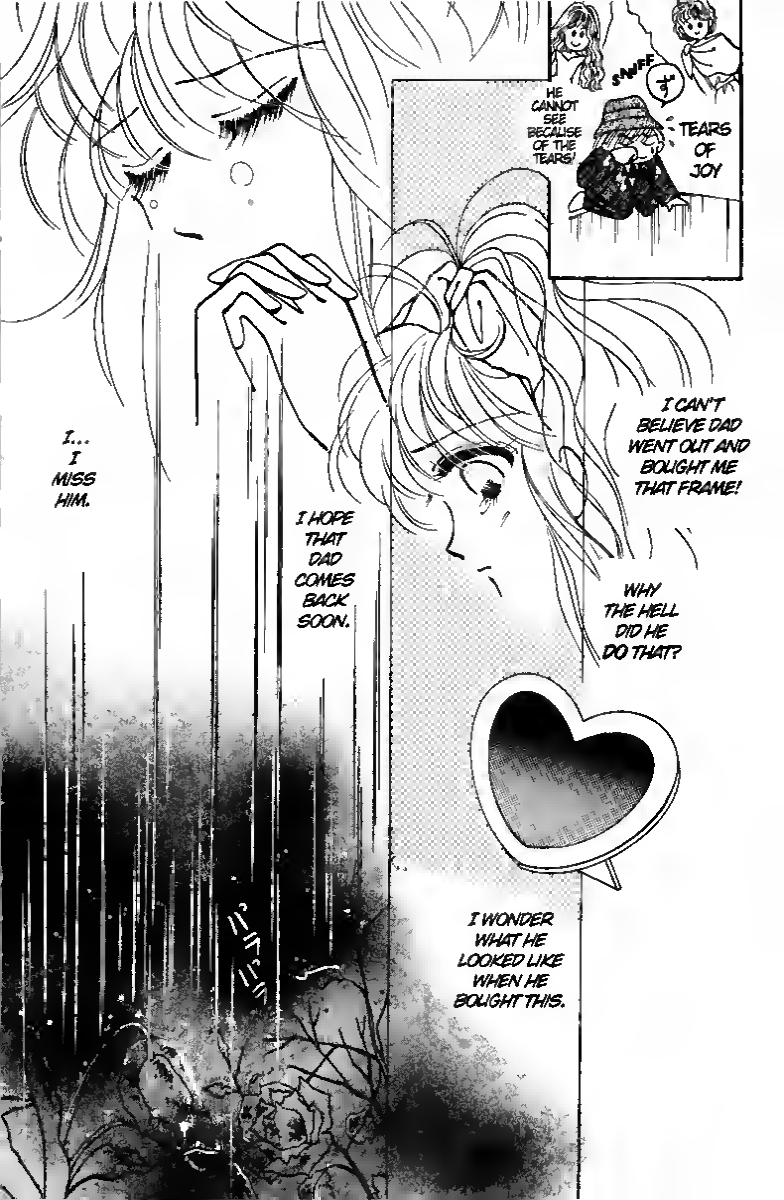
SHIORI, YOU'RE ARE MORE THAN JUST "ONE OF THE GUYS."
HMMM, IT LOOKS LIKE--
MY DAD AND I USED TO GET INTO FIGHTS BACK THEN....
--THIS GUY UNDERSTANDS HER MORE THAN ME.
SMACK!
STOP YOUR WHINING!

HE IS STARTING TO REGRET HIS BEHAVIOR.
IT SEEMS HE IS STARTING TO UNDERSTAND.
I'M GONNA KICK HIS BUTT WHEN HE COMES HOME!
HE'LL BE BACK SOON. I'M SURE OF IT.
I HOPE HE'S NOT HURT...
WE'LL CALL THE POLICE IF HE'S NOT BACK BY TOMORROW.
YUCK!
BLEEEH!
ペっペっペ
YOU'RE GIVING YOUR DAD A GIFT, RIGHT? WHY DON'T YOU HAVE CHOCOLATES WAITING FOR HIM?
CALM DOWN. IT'LL VALENTINE'S DAY VERY SOON.
?
FOR MY OLD MAN?
THAT'S A PRETTY SIGHT...

I USED TO DO THAT WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
DADDY, YOU'RE HOME! I HAVE A CHOCOLATE BAR FOR YOU!


I'LL PRACTICE BY MAKING ONE FOR DAD, FIRST!
I HAVE TO PRACTICE BEFORE I MAKE SOMETHING FOR NAKAYAMA.

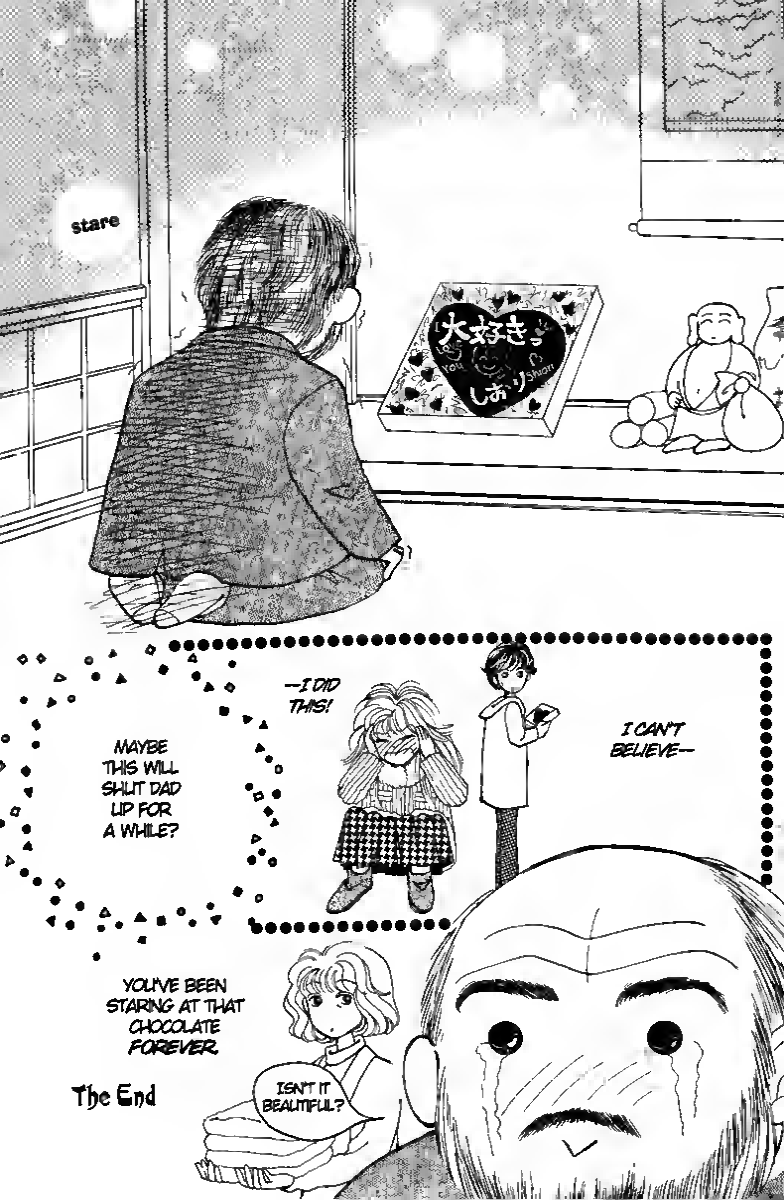
ぱちゃん SPLASH
THAT'S HOT!
THE CHOCOLATE!
I SPILLED IT!
SPLAT!
ぐちゃ
ぷぅ
MUSHY
WHAT THE HELL...
ばしゃ SPLASH
パーン SPILL
キーン SPLAT
SHE'S NOT USED TO COOKING.
ALL I NEED TO DO IT ADD SOME ALMONDS!
PHEW, AT LEAST ONE CAME OUT LOOKING OK.
THE KITCHEN IS NOW A WAR ZONE...
ALMONDS ARE SUPPOSED TO BRING GOOD LUCK!
SHE'S TRYING SO HARD!

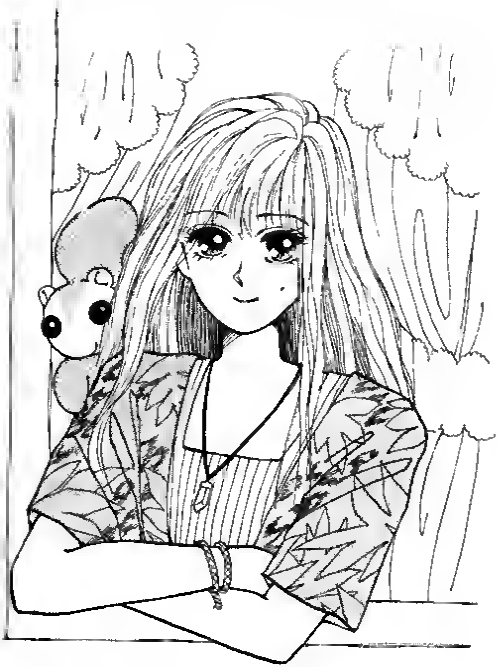

SNIFF
HE CANNOT SEE BECAUSE OF THE TEARS!
TEARS OF JOY
I CAN'T BELIEVE DAD WENT OUT AND BOUGHT ME THAT FRAME!
WHY THE HELL DID HE DO THAT?
I WONDER WHAT HE LOOKED LIKE WHEN HE BOUGHT THIS.
I HOPE THAT DAD COMES BACK SOON.
I... I MISS HIM.

POUR
I THINK WE CAN SEND HIM BACK NOW.
HURRAY!
THE FLOWERS ARE STARTING TO BLOOM AGAIN!
HEY, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THAT SOMEWHERE ELSE, HUH? JUST DON'T DO IT IN FRONT OF ME!
YOU DO WANT TO GO HOME, RIGHT? PLEASE SAY YES...
AND WHAT KIND OF OUTFITS ARE YOU WEARING ANYWAY, HUH? I HAVE TIES THAT CAN COVER MORE FLESH!

TCH-CK
MY BEER GUT'S BACK!
THAT MEANS I'M BALD AGAIN. NOOOO!
WHOOSH
DAD! OH MY GOD!!
!
OH, YOU'RE BACK!
KICK!
DIDN'T I ASK YOU TO KNOCK BEFORE YOU COME IN?
AAHHH!
WELL, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
WHERE'S DINNER?
I'M HUNGRY!

OH!
ガサ
HE'S TOUCHED! HE'S SHAKING!
AFTER ALL I TRIED SO HARD!
...
SHAKE
プル
THANKS!
CAN I OPEN IT NOW?
CHOCOLATE? FOR ME? WOW! THANKS!
BUT, I THINK...
OH NO!
I MADE A MISTAKE!
THAT MEANS...!!
プルプル
SHAKE
くそおやじ
Stupid Dad
Shiori
しおり


stare
大好き
しおり
MAYBE THIS WILL SHUT DAD UP FOR A WHILE?
—I DID THIS!
I CAN'T BELIEVE—
YOU'VE BEEN STARING AT THAT CHOCOLATE FOREVER.
ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL?
The End



Artist's Biography

Tomoko Taniguchi was born in Hokkaido, the northernmost part of Japan. She spent one year in Ann Arbor studying English and she graduated from the English institute program at the University of Michigan.

When she returned to Japan, she entered a contest held by a monthly horror magazine that was looking for new cartoonists. She submitted a forty-page story and won first prize. It was her debut as a professional cartoonist.

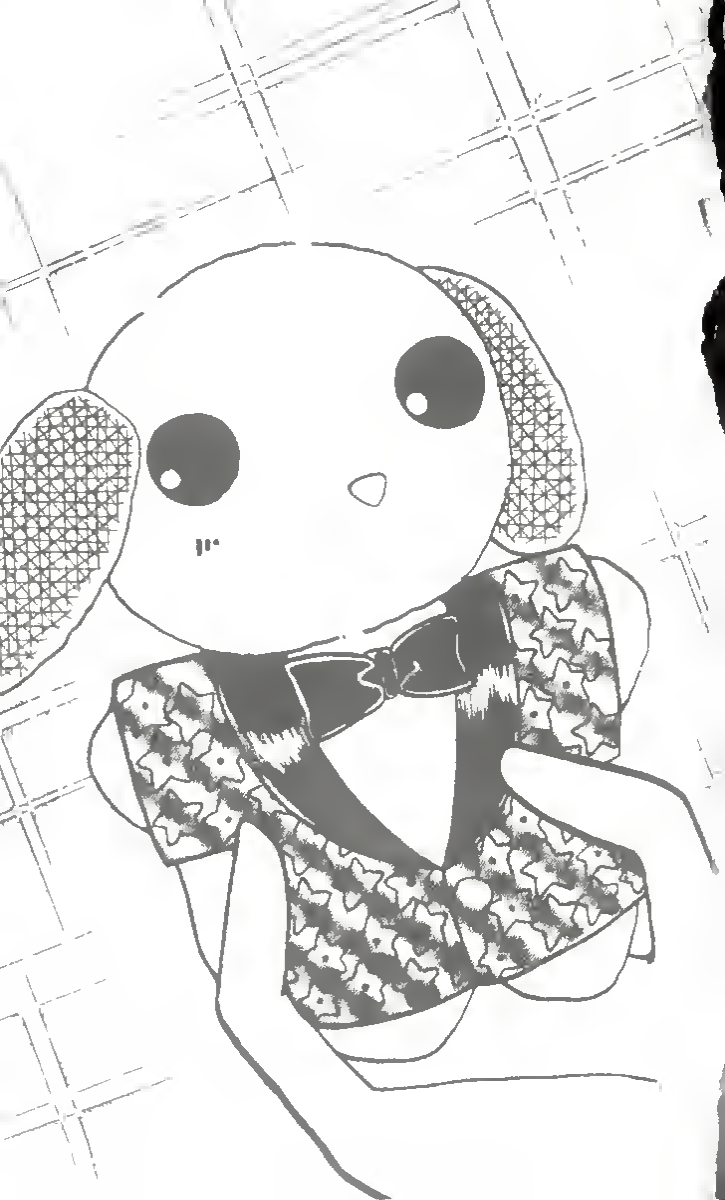
Her first shoujo story, *AN-PAN-BALANCE*, won another contest and was published in the monthly magazine *OMAJINAI COMICS*.

She has had a total of nine tankoubans (Japanese graphic novels) published under the MB (or My Birthday) Comics label in Japan, including *CALL ME PRINCESS*, *AQUARIUM*, *PRINCESS PRINCE* and *LET'S STAY TOGETHER FOREVER*. Tomoko has been published in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the U.S.A. and Mexico.

She was a Guest of Honor at the 2003 Big Apple Anime Fest in New York City, where she had the chance to meet her many fans in person.

Fans of Tomoko can visit her official website at http://www.h6.dion.ne.jp/~tomoko-t/index.html. Get the latest information about Ms. Taniguchi, as well as shop for original art pieces. For those wishing to purchase Tomoko's original works of art, e-mail her at richtomo@h9.dion.ne.jp.

Tomoko hopes that her stories will make people feel happy because that makes her happy too.



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